

5 Cents.

THE BRADYS ON THE ROAD OR THE STRANGE CASE OF A DRUMMER

By A. J. Cronin, Detective
AND OTHER STORIES



168 WEST 23RD ST. NEW YORK

Automobile and wagon collided. There was a grinding crash, the air was filled with debris, and Harry, hanging to his man, went over into the midst of it. The farmer went sailing over the fence.



SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES

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The Bradys on the Road

— OR —

THE STRANGE CASE OF A DRUMMER

By A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

CHAPTER I.

A CHAPTER OF CRIME.

The Chief of the Secret Service was exceedingly puzzled. In all his career as head of the great detective bureau he had never encountered a deeper problem.

A short while before, a man had entered his private office with the details of what was certainly a very strange case.

The chief had listened to his story with rapt interest.

He was the senior member of the firm of Swallow & Burch, dealers in cutlery and steel ware.

The firm did a large wholesale business and sent out many drummers all over the country.

"We've done a lot of business in our day," said Mr. Swallow, "and we have had many men in our employ.

"I flatter myself I know a little about human nature, too.

"I know that our smartest salesman was Sam Newman, though it turns out he's the biggest thief and scoundrel and maybe murderer that we ever knew."

"Whew!" exclaimed the chief. "You don't say."

"Yes, I do!"

"Who was this Newman? One of your drummers?"

"To be sure! He was the sharpest, jolliest fellow you ever knew, and we always believed him as bright and honest as a new dollar."

"When did you discover that he was otherwise?"

"About a month since. He dropped out of sight as completely as if the earth had swallow him up."

"Indeed!"

"And he left us a rich series of legacies. There were forged notes and checks scattered over the country to the extent of forty thousand dollars.

"He was last heard from at a small place known as White Creek. There he jumped his hotel bill and vanished. That same day the dead body of one of the town's richest citizens was found dead in his office. The safe door was open and the contents gone.

"Now, Newman was the last man seen to call on Richard Dalton, as the victim was named. Sam went there to get a raised check cashed.

"What followed, nobody knows. But it is assumed that he found the banker alone and killed him for the money in the safe. That was the last seen or known of him."

The chief made a careful note of all these facts.

Then he asked:

"Is there no prima facie evidence? Is this all that can be adduced to prove him the murderer?"

"Mercy, no!" replied Mr. Swallow. "His sample case was found at the hotel. It held some fine sets of knives and general cutlery. A fine carving-knife was missing.

"The same knife was found blood-stained beside the body of the murdered man."

"Ah, that is incriminating! Then you think Newman would be capable of such a deed?"

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed the merchant. "I was never so taken aback in my life. I always believed that Sam Newman was the straightest fellow in the world."

The chief was thoughtful a long while.

"What is your belief?" he finally asked.

"Oh, I believe that Sam either went crazy or really turned bad, and has skipped the country."

"You want detectives put on his track?"

"That is just it."

"Very good!" said the chief. "I will see that it is done."

The Honorable Mr. Swallow took his leave.

Then the chief went to the telephone and called up Police Headquarters.

"Is James Brady there?" he asked. "Or his partner, Harry Brady?"

"They are both here," replied the Chief of Police.

"Very good. Kindly ask them to step over to this office."

"All right."

The chief had not long to wait.

Before long the office door opened.

Two men entered.

The foremost was a tall, powerful-framed man with close-cut white hair, keen eyes, an alert manner and a general appearance out of the ordinary.

He was dressed plainly, in a tight-fitting blue coat, high stock collar and wide-brimmed hat.

All over the country he was known and famed as a great detective.

His name was James Brady, but he was better known by the cognomen of Old King Brady.

His companion was a young, athletic-built man, who affected to some extent Old King Brady's style of dress.

His name was Harry Brady, though the two detectives were of no blood relation.

He was a protege of the old detective and the two were fast friends.

Indeed, they were seen together so much that Harry had won the title of Young King Brady.

As the Bradys, detectives, they were known and feared in criminal circles far and wide.

The Chief of the Secret Service greeted them cordially.

"Ah, gentlemen!" he cried. "I have sent for you to undertake a case which I am sure will test your best prowess."

Old King Brady smiled in his grim way.

Harry nodded and laughed.

"That is just what we want, chief!" he said.

"Are you quite ready to undertake it?"

"We are!"

"Sit down, then, and I will give you the details."

The detectives complied.

The chief at once proceeded to detail the strange case of the drummer, Sam Newman, to them.

The Bradys listened with interest.

When the chief had finished, he asked:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"It looks like a good job," said Old King Brady, laconically.

"Yes, but—"

"What?"

"Is the drummer guilty of that murder?"

"That remains to be seen. It is too early to draw conclusions."

"You are right!" agreed the chief. "Well, you have the facts. Now, will you undertake the case?"

Old King Brady looked at Harry and both smiled.

"I should think we would," said Harry. "It looks just like our kind of a game."

"Good!" cried the chief. "You will certainly succeed. There is no doubt of that."

"We shall hope to!"

"What will be your first move?"

"Naturally, we will try to find Mr. Newman."

"Correct! You can then make easy deductions. Well, good luck to you, gentlemen."

The Bradys bowed themselves out.

As they passed along Broadway, Old King Brady bought a paper.

Almost the first thing his eye caught was the headline:

"No Clue as yet to the Perpetrator of the Dalton Murder! Detectives and Police are at bay. A Fact revealed which adds to the Mystery of the affair is that Newman, the suspected man, was a suitor for the hand of Miss Daisy Swallow, the daughter of his employer!"

"Why he should so certainly ruin his chances for winning her hand by committing such terrible crimes is a deep mystery. There is a general feeling that Newman may be insane!"

It was plain to the detectives that the Newman affair was in the eye of the people and certain to become the cause celebre of the day.

They went at once to their lodgings and prepared for work.

Various disguises were perfected and concealed about their persons.

Then they sat down to, in medical phraseology, make a diagnosis of the case before them.

"I don't believe that fellow committed that murder!" declared Harry.

"He did or he didn't," said Old King Brady, dogmatically. "That is for us to establish."

"Well, what do you think?"

"I have no opinion."

"But you have a plan?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I want first to pay a visit to the scene of the crime. I always deem that of first importance!"

"Good! That is our game."

"White Creek is somewhere in Cattaraugus County, I believe."

"Yes."

"It is a wild region."

"Just so."

"For all we know the Dalton crime may have been the work of desperadoes, of which there are many in that part of the country."

"Now we are getting at it!" cried Harry. "We may find that Newman has only been guilty of check raising and embezzlement, after all!"

"Just so."

"I am deeply interested in this case. But before we leave New York—"

"Well?"

"I want to pay a visit to Miss Daisy Swallow. Her opinion of Newman will weigh heavily with me in determining his character. He may be the victim of some sort of a misunderstanding. He may be totally innocent."

Old King Brady bit off a big piece of tobacco, reflectively.

"Well," he said, finally, "maybe you are right. It will do no harm. Go right up and pay your visit to Miss Swallow now. I will wait here."

"All right."

Harry needed no second bidding.

He donned his hat and coat and at once set forth.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE TRAIL.

The Honorable Asa Swallow lived in a fine house in upper Fifth Avenue.

Harry speedily found his way thither.

He sent in his card and was soon ushered into the elegant reception room.

In a few moments the fair daughter of the Congressman made her appearance.

She was a very lovely girl and popular in New York society.

But she had incurred her parents' displeasure by falling in love with Sam Newman, her father's traveling salesman.

Her eyes were swollen and her face pale as she appeared before Young King Brady.

"You are a detective?" she asked.

"I am!" replied Harry.

"Have you come to bring me news?"

"I have not. But I hope to some time. I have come to ask you the high favor of an interview."

"I grant it."

"You were quite familiar with Mr. Newman and his habits?"

"I think so."

"Ah!" said Harry. "Do you think he is the sort of a young man to raise checks, embezzle money and—yes, even commit murder?"

"No, sir!" replied the young girl, vehemently. "I tell you, Sam is innocent. There is something wrong about it. He is not guilty of these charges!"

Harry watched her closely.

He saw that she was very earnest and sincere. He was conscious of her loyalty and admired it.

"Indeed, I shall prove his innocence if it is possible," he said. "But of course you know that human nature is frail, and it is possible that he has deceived you."

"Never!" she flashed, hotly. "I tell you Sam Newman is innocent! I know him too well."

Harry said no more.

As soon as possible he excused himself and went back to his lodgings. There he found Old King Brady.

"Well?" asked the old detective. "What did you arrive at?"

"This," replied Harry: "if Sam Newman is a rascal, he is also lucky, for he must have some redeeming traits to have won the absolute confidence of such a girl as that!"

"Women are strange," said Old King Brady. "They will perjure themselves for those they love."

"Just the same, I do not believe this is a case of perjury."

"You don't?"

"No."

Old King Brady was astonished.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Then you are also an advocate of Newman's?"

"I acknowledge the possibility of his innocence."

"But as a detective it is not your duty to prove his innocence."

"Yet I am open to conviction. I know that it is always the province of the detective to prove every man a rogue until he is able to prove himself honest."

"Are not the honest men few?"

"I am not so pessimistic."

"No, nor am I!" agreed Old King Brady. "I admit that for the sake of that young girl I shall be delighted to see him cleared of the charge against him. Yet he is guilty."

"Yes, that is true."

But the Bradys now began to pack their effects.

This did not take long.

Skilled detectives such as they were knew how to economize space.

There was no need of hand-bag or satchel to carry their effects.

They were few and simple and easily stowed away about the person.

So when the Bradys crossed the North River and took the West Shore express for White Creek, they were made up as common workmen looking for a job.

They rode in the smoking car and lounged with the men of that class.

When they alighted at the White Creek station the next morning they attracted little attention.

There was never the slightest sort of a suspicion that they were detectives in disguise.

White Creek was a town of the mushroom type.

It had sprung up in a day, and at present had reached its fullest stage of development. Its next stage would be that of retrogression.

Richard Dalton, the banker and founder of the town, had been its mainstay.

With his death, matters had begun to look dark for the little community.

The citizens were in a very much excited state of mind.

A heavy reward had been offered for the murderer. Armed men were yet searching the wild mountainous region about, but seemingly to no purpose. Suspicion rested most heavily upon Sam Newman. But he had dropped from sight. Not a trace of the rascally drummer was to be found anywhere.

The detectives strolled leisurely through the town and familiarized themselves as much as possible with affairs.

When night came they compared notes.

But they were bound to admit that they had gained little.

They found that the mystery was ten times intensified.

The next morning, however, as they came down into the office of the little hotel, they were met with a most startling development.

Word had just arrived from a neighboring town, known as Eagle Valley, that Newman had been seen there and had boldly attempted to sell a bill of cutlery to a local store-keeper.

The Bradys heard this statement with interest.

Of course, there was incredulity.

It would seem bravado or mere foolhardiness on the part of the villain to thus tempt fate.

But the report was stoutly affirmed as a fact.

So Old King Brady said:

"The best thing we can do, Harry, is to run over to Eagle Valley and see what it means."

"Correct!"

They found that this entailed a drive of some ten miles over rough roads.

But they procured a carriage and driver and set forth. In due time they reached Eagle Valley.

It was a small town about half the size of White Creek.

The Bradys made guarded inquiries and soon found that the report in regard to Newman was correct.

He had in truth appeared boldly in Eagle Valley and had tried to sell a fictitious bill of goods.

Finding that there was suspicion against him, he had hastily decamped.

The detectives now picked up the first thread they had been able to find and proceeded to follow it.

Step by step they tracked their man.

They found the stable where Newman had hired a team to take him out of town.

Then they interviewed the driver and learned the point to which he had been driven.

The fellow, a big, hulking countryman, declared:

"Ye see, he jes' didn't make no talk with me at all. A quieter man I never seed. He was pretty free with his cigars an' money, an' ye'd really like him. I left him by his request at ther county line. I reckon he meant to walk from thar over ter Pride's Station on ther Erie an' git a train. I dunno nuthin' more about it."

The Bradys, in their turn, hired a team to take them out to Pride's Station.

The station agent was interviewed.

"Yes," said that worthy, "I reckon he did come here. I remember him mighty well. He bought a ticket for White Creek."

The detectives were astonished.

"For White Creek?"

"Yes."

"Aren't you mistaken?"

"No, siree!"

And no amount of argument or questioning would shake the fellow's statement.

He asserted positively that Newman had bought a ticket for White Creek.

The detectives were puzzled.

It seemed incredible.

Moreover, it was a wholly unlikely proceeding that the murderer should thus double on his tracks when there was such risk.

He would be certain to keep away from a place where detectives were on all sides.

So it seemed to the Bradys.

However, they could not shake the station agent's declaration. In the matter of identity he was positive.

Thus the detectives were for a time stumped.

But suddenly an idea came to Young King Brady.

It was like a bolt from a clear sky. The explanation was easy.

"I have it!" he cried. "We are getting dull, partner."

"Eh, what do you mean?"

"It is quite reasonable that Newman went down on this train to White Creek."

"Ah, that is possible!"

The Bradys acted quickly.

The next train took them back to White Creek. Here they were back at their starting point and but little better off than before.

But they felt encouraged.

If it should please Newman to thus go masquerading about the country, sooner or later he would pay very dearly for his temerity.

The best they could do was to watch and wait.

And this they did.

Time passed slowly.

A week drifted by.

In all this time the Bradys had not struck a clew. It seemed, indeed, like very slow work.

But just as they were ready to yield to impatience a chance for action came.

One day a man came excitedly into the hotel office.

"Have you heard the latest?" he asked of the bystanders.

They listened agog.

"Newman the drummer has got in some of his fine work again!"

The detectives were on the qui vive.

They drew nearer.

"Sho!" exclaimed the hotel proprietor. "What is it now?"

"He passed a check on the White Creek National Bank on Jim Haynes, up at Slab City, for three hundred dollars. Poor Jim is all broke up over it."

Old King Brady pushed his way forward.

"My good man," he said, "will you do me a favor?"

CHAPTER III.

THE CANAL TRIP.

The man turned upon Old King Brady and regarded him in surprise.

"Eh!" he exclaimed. "What is it?"

"Tell me where I can find this Mr. Haynes."

"Sartin! Jest go up to Slab City and ask anybody there will they tell you where he lives."

"Where is Slab City?"

"Drive out by the Williston turnpike. Take an old road to the west at the big cross-roads. It's only a logging camp at best."

Old King Brady turned away.

"Come, Harry," he said.

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going up to that logging camp."

"Do you expect to find your man there?"

"If I don't I may find a clew."

"That is so," agreed the young detective. "It's not a bad plan."

So the Bradys at once set out for Slab City.

Arriving there, they had little trouble in finding Jim Haynes. He was in a very downcast mood.

"It's took about all my pile," he said. "Ye see, the feller came here an' bought my two-year-old colt. He didn't have any money, but showed this check. I reckoned it was good, an' as I was gittin' a good price for my colt, I took it and give him the balance in money."

"And you found the check was a forgery?"

"The wust kind!"

"Well, I'm sorry for you, Mr. Haynes," said Old King Brady. "But we'd like to see Mr. Newman."

"So would I!"

"Have you any idea where he intended going from here?"

The lumberman was thoughtful.

"I remember his axin' me a lot of questions about Woodcrest Camp."

"Where is that?"

"It's a logging camp up here about forty miles in the mountains. It's a good place for him to strike, for there's plenty of money in there. The loggers have a bank of their own up there."

"How do you get to the place?" asked Old King Brady.

"There's a number of ways. You kin trail in by blazed trees or you kin go in by canal on the river. There is a good road on the other side of the mountain."

"How would you advise going in there?"

"Be you goin'?" asked Haynes, sharply.

"I don't know."

"Waal, if you do go, take the river, by all means. You ought to paddle it in two days, easy."

"Thank you!"

The Bradys turned away.

But Haynes shouted after them:

"I say, be you goin' by way of ther river?"

"I think so," replied Old King Brady.

"Waal, I'll offer ye the use of my canoe if ye'll only agree to do all ye kin to git my three hundred outen the critter."

"We accept your offer," said Old King Brady. "Where is your canoe?"

"Glad to show ye!"

Haynes led the way to the river.

The canoe suited the detectives well. They made quick preparations.

At the camp store they procured supplies for the trip.

Haynes was much interested.

"I wish I was goin' with ye," he declared. "On my word, I do!"

"We will let you know what our success is on our return," said Old King Brady.

"Thank ye! But looky here, friends!"

"Well?"

"What be you after the rascal fer? Are you detectives?"

Old King Brady looked at Harry, and in spite of themselves they could not help a smile.

Haynes saw this, and with a deprecatory wave of his hand said:

"It's all right. You needn't say so. I'll keep dark. Durn me, but I wish ye the best of luck. No matter if ye don't ever return the canoe."

The Bradys were soon on their way to Woodcrest Camp.

They were expert in the use of a canoe, and went along finely. The river current was with them and the scenery beautiful.

Through the wilds they traveled all that day.

When night came they found a deserted cabin in the woods which served as a shelter.

Here they passed the night quite comfortably. They had provided themselves with sufficient food to last them.

The next morning they resumed their journey.

They were rounding a bend in the river when they met a canoe in which were two woodmen.

"Hello, strangers!" said the foremost. "Where are ye bound?"

"We're on our way to Woodcrest Camp!" replied Old King Brady. "Can you tell us the best way?"

"Keep right on and ye'll git there."

"How far is it?"

"I reckon about eight miles."

"Thank you!"

"Ye're welcome."

The two canoes passed each other. The Bradys paddled on.

A couple of hours later they drifted down between two small islands and saw the log shanties of Woodcrest Camp on a bluff above.

Some red-shirted lumbermen were working in the river on a jam of logs.

Others were on shore. The buzz of sawmills could be heard.

The Bradys paddled down to the little landing and went ashore.

They drew their canoe out upon the bank and then took a look about them.

Woodcrest was a typical lumber camp.

But it was of greater size than the ordinary. It consisted of over a hundred buildings of logs and bark.

The store was a long building with floorless piazzas. Here the lumbermen lounged and smoked and squirted tobacco juice to their hearts' content.

Woodcrest was remarkable for the orderly character of its denizens. Very seldom was there a report from this camp of brawling or fighting.

Some of the lumbermen had brought their families deep into this wild region. So there were refining influences.

But despite this there were lawless men in Woodcrest.

The Bradys knew well enough what sort of a community it was, and were prepared.

They sauntered leisurely up to the store.

Rough-looking loungers stared at them insolently.

But the detectives, in a careless, indifferent way, entered the store.

Hiram Dane, the store-keeper, looked at them shrewdly.

He sized them up at once as sportsmen in the woods for game.

"Howdy, strangers!" he said, brusquely. "What luck? Jim Jenkins saw a fine buck deer down at the lower carry yesterday."

"We are not looking for game of that kind, my friend," replied Old King Brady, in a low tone of voice.

The store-keeper stared.

"Oh! Ye ain't, eh?"

"No, sir!"

"Mought I ask what yer bizness is, then?"

"Certainly!"

"I hope ye're not drummers. Thar's been one here already."

"Eh!" exclaimed Old King Brady, sharply. "Did you say a drummer had been here before us?"

"Yes, sir, I did!"

"What line did he carry?"

"Cutlery, I reckon! I ordered knives and forks, though our men don't keer much about forks in eatin'. Do ye know the feller? He's from New York, too."

With this the store-keeper tendered Old King Brady a card. Thus it read:

"Samuel Newman, with Swallow & Burch, dealers in cutlery!"

It is hardly necessary to say that the Bradys were interested.

Old King Brady looked at the card and then at Harry, and then he turned to the store-keeper.

"Mr. Dane," he said, "did you order a bill of goods from this fellow?"

"I reckon I did."

"Have you got your goods yet?"

"No."

"Ah! Did you pay for them?"

"No."

"Ahem! Did Mr. Newman ask any favor of you? Such as the cashing of a check or the loan of a hundred or two?"

Hiram Dane, the store-keeper, stared at the old detective.

"Air ye a mind-reader?" he asked. "I don't mind telling you thet he did ask me to cash a check for him. He's coming around with it about four this afternoon."

"Then you have not yet given him the money?"

"No."

"And he's coming in at four this afternoon?"

"Yes."

The two detectives exchanged glances. Old King Brady smiled grimly. He muttered in an undertone to Harry:

"That will be our chance to bag our man."

Dane, the store-keeper, had become suddenly aroused. He raised himself on the counter and stared at Old King Brady.

"Looky here!" he said, shrewdly. "You don't mind tellin' me: Is there anything wrong about cashing thet check?"

"Who signs the check?" asked Harry.

"Captain Williams, the owner of this camp and all the country about here. He is our richest man."

Old King Brady leaned over the counter.

"Look here, Dane," he said, impressively. "you have your money ready to give Mr. Newman at the appointed hour. See that you do it."

The store-keeper whistled softly.

"See that I give him the money?"

"No, have it ready. You say the check is signed by Mr. Williams?"

"Yaas."

"Where is he?"

"He went down to New York two days ago."

"Ah! Will he return to-day?"

"Not for a week."

"Are you familiar with his handwriting?"

"Yaas, perfectly."

"Then you are sure he signed the check?"

The store-keeper's jaw fell. He looked inscrutably at the old detective for a moment.

"Sho!" he exclaimed. "Dew tell! It's a forgery, then?"

"I don't know," replied Old King Brady. "The check may be good. But we want to be present when you cash it."

"And you kin tell when ye see it whether it's good or not?"

"Yes."

"All right!" agreed Dane. "You be on hand at four o'clock. Durn me, but if he's a forger or a swindler, he's hit a bad kentry, an' I tell ye——"

"Sh! Go easy! Remember what I say. Speak of this matter to nobody. Keep quiet. We will be around at four."

"All right, gentlemen."

The Bradys left the store. They went back to their canoe at the landing.

They were exceedingly jubilant, for they felt sure of success.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW FACTOR.

The Bradys were confident that the swindler, Newman, did not suspect their presence at Woodcrest.

To him the field was clear.

He would get his money for the forged check at four o'clock and then skip the region.

All would certainly have worked well, and he would surely have been trapped, but for certain circumstances.

When the detectives reached the wharf they noticed a man leaning against one of the piles.

His appearance was utterly out of keeping with the place.

He was dressed in the conventional garb of a business man from the city, and complacently puffed a fragrant cigar.

Store clothes and cigars were an unknown luxury in Woodcrest.

He glanced idly at the detectives. But they were instantly interested in him.

"Do you see that chap?" whispered Harry.

"Yes."

"What do you make of him?"

"He looks out of place here."

The detectives pretended to be busy with their canoe.

But all the while they were busy sizing up the unknown.

To their surprise the stranger gave them substantial assistance.

He lounged across the wharf and said with idle curiosity:

"Just come up the river?"

"No," replied Old King Brady. "We came down."

"Oh, so did I! Looking for game, I reckon?"

"Yes," replied Old King Brady, truthfully. "That's what we're here for!"

"So am I."

"Ah! You don't look like a hunter."

The other laughed.

"Oh, I don't intend to kill my man," he said. "I shall surrender him to the tender mercies of the law."

"Then you are a detective?"

"To the contrary, I am merely an honest, every-day citizen."

The Bradys abandoned their work and came up on the wharf.

"We are interested," said Harry. "Tell us your story. Perhaps we may be of assistance."

"I daresay," said the young man, for such he was. "My name is Elbert Kane. I am private secretary of Mr. Asa Swallow, of New York. He has all confidence in me, and entrusts all his private affairs to me."

"I have been partially engaged to his daughter, Daisy, and no doubt she would long ago have been my wife but for the machinations of a murderous villain."

"This scoundrel, who has thoroughly hypnotized her, is the notorious Sam Newman, the drummer, whose evil deeds are at present known the country over."

"As it is necessary for her safety and the well-being of many others that he should be placed in limbo, I am on his trail. I have tracked him here. That is the game I am after."

And Elbert Kane laughed again.

The Bradys listened to this story with interest.

Kane had an honest, open face, with the most child-like of expressions, and mild blue eyes.

It was not difficult to believe that he was all that he had claimed, and that he had told the truth.

"Miss Swallow will not believe aught against Newman," said Harry.

"Indeed, no!" agreed Kane.

"How do you account for that?"

"Only, as I say, by the theory of hypnotism."

"There is something in that," agreed Old King Brady. "So that is what you are in this region for?"

"Yes."

"Well, we wish you luck."

"Thank you! Perhaps I owe you a word of explanation as a prelude to a request I have to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"Just this: No doubt you wonder why I am so outspoken and why I have betrayed my game to you."

"It is just this way: I saw you land here and recognized the

fact at once that you are strangers and that you are men of civilized training and methods. I am alone in this lawless region."

"It is possible that I might have hard work in convincing these semi-barbarous woodmen that my charges against the villain are just. I shall need support, and I venture to ask you if you will grant it?"

Old King Brady looked at Harry, and then said:

"We will be pleased to give you all the aid in our power."

"Thank you!"

"In fact, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with you."

"Ah! You are very kind."

"It might be as well to inform you of the fact that Mr. Newman will call at the store of Hiram Dane at four o'clock to cash a forged check!"

Kane gave a little start.

The light in his eyes was inscrutable. He half smiled for an instant. Then eagerness shone in his face.

"Do you mean it?" he exclaimed. "Why, that is just the opportunity we want, then."

"Yes."

"Will you assist me?"

"Certainly!"

"Very good. Then we will meet at Mr. Dane's store at four o'clock?"

"Yes."

Kane shook hands cordially with the detectives. Then he started away, but suddenly turned.

"By the way!" he called. "How do you know that check is a forged check?"

"We are convinced that it is, as Newman is in the habit of passing such," replied Harry.

"Ah! Did you acquaint Mr. Dane with that fact?"

"We did."

"Everything is coming my way!" cried Kane with great glee. "Forewarned is certainly forearmed. I shall be ready."

And he strode, chuckling, away.

The Bradys were silent for a time. Then Harry exclaimed:

"I have a queer feeling about this matter."

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"What is queer?" he asked.

"I cannot exactly tell you."

They finished stowing away the canoe, and then walked toward the sawmill.

Here the great logs were being rapidly converted to boards and some of the boards to shingles.

The Bradys watched the operation for a while. They listened to the talk of the mill men.

"Did yew see them two pilgrims what came up ther river in a canoe this mornin', Jim?" asked one of the men of another.

"Shut up, Hank! They're right over thar now."

"Durned ef I keer fer that! I've a notion they're peelers."

"Peelers?"

"Yaas; or game wardens! Ther law ain't off on moose yit, an' if they go nosin' about up yere they'll git intew trouble, you bet!"

"Waal, I reckon!"

"This hain't no kentry fer officers of any kind."

"Now. We kin make our own laws up yere."

The Bradys heard all this and knew what it meant.

They realized that the attempt to arrest Newman on the spot would result in trouble beyond doubt.

The rough woodmen had a natural antipathy for officers of the law.

The detectives also knew that they were capable of making much trouble. There was no doubt of this.

"Well, we must outwit them, that's all!" said Old King Brady.

"How?"

"Why, spring the handcuffs onto Newman when there's nobody around. Then we can run him off down the river on the quiet."

"It looks to be our only chance."

"And so it is."

The hour of four was rapidly drawing near.

Very soon the Bradys made their way over to the store. They entered and greeted Dane.

The store-keeper was naturally somewhat excited.

"He ain't cum yet," he said, "but I'm lookin' fer him at any minnit."

The Bradys seated themselves in a corner and waited.

Presently a form darkened the doorway.

It was Elbert Kane.

He greeted the detectives with a nod and, coming nearer, sat down beside them.

"Kind of queer that he don't show up, isn't it?" he whispered.

"He'll come along in time," said Old King Brady. "You're sure he has not got the alarm?"

"Oh, sure!" replied Kane. "He hasn't seen any of us."

"That's so."

Time passed slowly.

The clock marked half after four, and then five.

Still Newman did not show up. Harry grew pessimistic.

"We are beaten," he said. "He has got the alarm and skipped!"

"Wait a bit," said Old King Brady.

"Suppose we start a search," said Kane. "We're losing time here."

But they still continued to wait. Six o'clock came.

Hiram Dane stood by the counter with his eyes fixed on the door. Desultory customers came and went.

But no Newman.

"No use!" said Harry.

Old King Brady drew a deep breath.

He arose and walked to the counter.

"Dane," he said, sternly, "I thought we warned you to tell nobody of our purpose to waylay Newman here?"

The store-keeper gasped and choked.

"Really, friend, I only told my wife, an' I know she only told one person, and that person wouldn't tell."

"Fool!" said Old King Brady, angrily. "You have ruined all."

CHAPTER V.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

Dane made earnest protest, but Old King Brady angrily ignored him.

Elbert Kane took up the subject and fell to abusing the store-keeper until Harry checked him.

Then Dane said:

"Well, I did all I could, and jest what you told me."

Kane turned to Old King Brady and said, with a queer light in his eyes:

"Oho! So you were up here after the same game as myself?"

Old King Brady returned his gaze.

"Yes," he replied, bluntly.

"How is that? Do you want him on the same charge?"

"We do!"

"Who are you?"

"Well," said the old detective, with a shrug of his shoulders, "we once merited the name of detectives, but we have made so many miserable failures lately that we may only claim to be the veriest of tyros."

Kane smiled in a curious way.

"Well," he said, "Newman has slipped some of the smartest of them. But now I think I place you. You are the Bradys, of New York."

"Yes," replied the old detective.

"I am glad to meet you and to know you. The question now seems to be, what is to be done?"

"We must get onto the trail again," said Old King Brady. "Have you any idea where Newman would go from here?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"To Bennings, ten miles below here. It is the only way out of this region save by the way we came in, and he'd never dare to go back that way."

"You're right!" cried Old King Brady. "Then we must get right after him at once."

"It's the only way!"

"We will lose no time. What is the best way to reach Bennings?"

"The river is the only way."

"Ah! We have our canoe."

"That is it!"

"She will carry three."

"But I fear I cannot go on such short notice," said Kane, regretfully. "I shall hope to overtake you, however. I wish you success."

"Then we will start at once. He cannot have had many hours' start."

"No, I think not."

"Well, good-day, Mr. Kane."

"Glad to have met you."

"Good-day!"

The detectives shook hands with Kane. Then they hurried down to the boat-landing.

Darkness did not deter them.

They pushed out into the current and started away down the river. For hours they paddled on.

Then they decided to go ashore and make camp for the rest of the night.

They selected a suitable place and paddled ashore.

A small fire was built and they prepared themselves for a few hours' sleep under the canoe.

It was not deemed necessary to maintain a watch.

How long they slept they never knew, but Harry was awakened in a curious manner. A strange presentiment of evil came to him in his dream.

He awoke with a start to find himself covered with a cold, clammy perspiration.

For a moment he was hardly able to collect his senses.

Then he saw the dying embers of the fire a few feet distant and felt an impulse to crawl out from the shelter of the canoe.

But before he could move, a thrilling spectacle held him completely enthralled.

Beyond the firelight he saw the outlines of dark forms.

Then stealthily into the circle of firelight he saw these forms creep. They assumed the outlines of human beings, rough-clad men.

And they were creeping toward the canoe with gleaming knives in their hands.

For a moment Harry fancied it a dream.

Then he felt a cold chill traverse his spine. He knew that he faced deadly peril.

These men were would-be murderers, thugs of the woods. Perhaps they had followed them from Woodcrest.

Harry's first impulse was to awaken his partner.

But he already saw that there was not time for that.

Swift as a flash he acted.

He reached beneath his blanket and drew forth a pistol.

This he leveled at the foremost of the foes. He had no thought of killing the brute.

His plan was to wound him and perhaps stay the attack.

So Harry took careful aim at the fellow's hand, the hand which held the knife. Then he fired.

The report awoke the echoes of the forest.

It went reverberating across the limpid waters of the river and found an echo in the fog banks above.

It was instantly followed by a yell of mortal agony.

The smitten villain leaped in the air and rolled over in intense pain. Twice more Harry fired.

But without aim.

The shots were random and intended to frighten the foe. And they succeeded perfectly.

The would-be murderers, who seemed to be in number not above four, broke and fled precipitately down the river bank.

By this time Old King Brady was on his feet, the canoe was overturned, and the two detectives were on the defensive.

But the assailant did not appear again.

Of course the detectives did not return to sleep, but remained watchful and alert during the rest of the night.

When daylight came at last they were relieved.

They descended the river bank and examined the shore.

Footprints were found and the imprint of the keel of a canoe in the sand.

But that was all.

They saw no more of their assailants on their way to Bennings.

Who they were or what had become of them they could only guess.

"It is my opinion," said Harry, "that they followed us from Woodcrest, thinking to rob us."

"That is quite possible," agreed Old King Brady.

Bennings was reached in due time.

This was a camp similar to that of Woodcrest.

But it was not quite so large.

The detectives went ashore and soon found lodgings.

For two days they hung about the place. But nothing was seen or heard of Newman.

Finally they concluded that they were wholly off the scent and that it was of no use to remain longer.

They were deeply chagrined.

"I never saw anything like it!" declared Old King Brady. "Luck is certainly against us."

One day they dropped down the river again in their canoe.

They finally reached Slab City in safety.

Here they returned the canoe to Jim Haynes.

The lumberman was much disappointed at their failure to catch Newman.

"He's a slippery rogue," he declared, "but ye'll git him yet."

"You are right, we will!" said Harry. "We never fail."

The Bradys now returned to White Creek. When they dropped into this little town it was to be rewarded with a startling surprise.

The daily paper had a fresh account of a new swindle by Newman, the drummer, in a neighboring city.

The Bradys were staggered.

"Enough!" said Old King Brady. "There's only one thing for us to do, Harry."

"What?"

"We must change our plan of action."

"How?"

"Well, my idea is to start out on the road ourselves."

"On the road?"

"Yes. We will become drummers as well. We will travel on the same line that Newman affects to follow. We may come up with him in that way."

"Very good!" agreed Harry. "I think that's the right plan."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRADYS ON THE ROAD.

An early train took the Bradys down to New York.

Their first move was to pay a visit to the Honorable Asa Swallow at his Fifth avenue residence.

They found him at home and glad to welcome them.

The detectives detailed the result of their labors.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Swallow. "You cannot know how disappointed I am in Sam Newman. He was my best salesman, and I always found him honest until this affair at White Creek."

"He is certainly an adroit rogue now," said Old King Brady.

"I should say so. His villainy surpasses everything."

"That is true."

"But what are your plans now?"

"We would rather not divulge them," said Old King Brady.

"But you shall know in due season."

"I trust you will succeed."

"We hope to. I wonder what luck your friend, Mr. Kane met with?"

"Elbert!" exclaimed Mr. Swallow. "Oh, he is home. So you met him up at Woodcrest?"

"Yes."

"He met with a painful accident up there. As soon as his wound heals he will start out again."

The Bradys exchanged glances.

"What was the nature of the accident?" asked Harry.

"He injured his hand, I believe. Pistol accidentally exploded and made a hole through the hand."

Harry's nerves thrilled. In that instant he remembered the shot he had fired at the hand which held the knife that dark night on the river bank.

Could it be possible? Yet he could not believe it. Nothing more than a very strange coincidence.

Just at this moment the door of the room opened.

A man stood on the threshold.

He evidently had not been aware of the presence of visitors.

"Oh, I beg pardon!" he exclaimed, and turned to withdraw.

"Hold on, Elbert!" cried Mr. Swallow. "These are friends of yours. Pray come in."

Kane glanced at the detectives.

For one instant the expression upon his face was inscrutable.

Then a genial smile beamed upon his countenance, and he came forward eagerly.

"The detectives!" he exclaimed. "Ah, gentlemen, I am glad to see you. What luck did you have at Bennings?"

"We discovered that our man was not there," said Old King Brady.

"Indeed, I am sorry to have sent you astray," said Kane, with the most extreme of regret.

"That is of no account," said Old King Brady, suavely. "But I see you met with an injury."

Kane's mild blue eyes met the detective's unflinchingly.

"Yes, the accidental explosion of my pistol," said Kane, with a light laugh. "It is of slight importance."

"How odd," said Harry. "I shot a man through the hand that night on the river."

"I hope you'll not accuse me of being the man," laughed Kane, in a hearty way. "I have an easy alibi."

The Bradys were disarmed.

"By no means," declared Harry. "But has your daughter changed her opinion of Newman, Mr. Swallow?"

"By no means," cried Kane. "Like all of her sex, she is loyal to the man she pins her faith to. I am sorry for her, for she will be wcefully deceived."

"Her head is filled with nonsense," said Swallow, angrily. "She must rid herself of it."

The Bradys took their leave a moment later.

"Now," said Old King Brady, "to carry out our plans."

"What are they?"

"From town to town we will travel until we have scoured the country. As the towns struck by Newman are usually remote from the railroad, and we must have rapid conveyance, my plan is to hire an automobile. We can then get around with great rapidity."

"A capital idea," agreed Harry.

It did not take the detectives long to find what they were in quest of.

The result was that a little later they were bowling out of the city in a light vehicle of the automobile class.

Out into the country they ran. Over smooth roads they traveled for a long time.

But finally they reached a region which was wild and rural to the last degree.

Here they came to little villages and towns where the population was small, and their appearance created a sensation.

In every town the Bradys made a bluff of advertising a patent medicine prepared in New York.

They distributed circulars and bills.

Before the hotel door in the evening they would draw up the automobile.

Then Old King Brady would expatiate in a resounding voice upon the merits of the quack nostrum, while Harry thrummed a banjo and sang a topical song.

The crowd, of course, was delighted.

The two dashing salesmen from New York at once caught the town.

Great crowds listened to the entertainment afforded them.

For days the detectives traveled on in this way.

But not for an instant did they fail to take advantage of every possible method to learn the whereabouts of their man.

They inspected hotel registers, watched the arrivals, made guarded inquiries and kept their eyes open.

But yet they gained no clew.

Days passed into weeks.

It looked as if the game was against them, and Newman had them badly beaten.

But one day they dropped into a little town called Newington.

Among the crowd which gathered before the hotel entrance they saw a familiar figure.

It was Elbert Kane.

The fellow was idly listening to Harry's banjo playing.

So far as the Bradys could see he had not penetrated their disguise, and did not know them.

"Do you see him?" asked Harry.

"Yes."

"What is he doing here?"

"That is a question."

"Had we not better ascertain?"

"Of course."

Old King Brady arose and made his speech. All the while he kept an eye on Kane.

It was a fact that this fellow was always in the vicinity of Newman's operations. If he was able to thus get so close to the bird it was odd that he did not secure him.

The Bradys were satisfied that Kane was possessed of no ordinary ability.

They regarded him in a measure with suspicion ever since the night on the river, when Harry had fired the shot through his assailant's hand.

That Kane was the assailant there was no other evidence.

Neither was there easily shown a logical reason for his attempt upon the lives of the detectives.

Yet the strangeness of the coincidence was not without its effect upon the Bradys.

They were thrilled to meet Kane in this place.

The belief was theirs that Newman was not far away. The faint suspicion of collusion had occurred to Old King Brady, but he banished it.

Kane remained in the crowd watching the detectives.

There was no sign of recognition on his part.

But yet the detectives felt uneasy. Finally Old King Brady finished his work and turned the automobile about. He ran it into the stable where it was kept, and left it there. Then the Bradys turned and entered the hotel. As they did so, they saw Kane standing by the clerk's desk. He glanced at them curiously. "Shall we speak to him?" asked Harry, in a whisper. "Leave it to me." "You don't think he will recognize us?" "What if he does?" "That is so." So, as Old King Brady lounged nearer, he met the gaze of Kane. He nodded in a brusque way, and asked: "On the road?" "Well, only for pleasure," replied Kane. "Ah, you're lucky! We are slaves of the road. Nice little town this." "Yes, very fine," replied Kane, dryly. Then he turned away as if he desired to terminate the conversation. Harry and Old King Brady now strolled away. They sat down in chairs by the window and proceeded to watch people passing by. "I wonder what that Kane is doing up here?" mused Harry. "He may be here, as he declares, on a pleasure trip." "I don't believe it." "Ah, you don't?" "No." "What is your idea?" "I believe that he is on track of Newman again." "If that is so, we ought to co-operate with him." "Unless——" The two detectives looked steadily at each other. "That does not stand to reason," said Old King Brady, with a shake of the head. "Newman can have no possible connection with Kane." Just at that moment Kane passed the window on his way down the street. An impulse seized Harry. He arose quickly. "Where are you going?" asked Old King Brady. "I will return presently," replied the young detective. "An idea occurred to me." "Very good!" With this Harry glided out of the office. Upon the street he followed Kane. For several blocks he followed the New Yorker. Suddenly Kane turned into a dark side street. Harry darted quickly after him. But when he turned into the side street the fellow was out of sight. And, search as he would, Harry could not again get track of him. After a long while, much chagrined, the young detective returned to the hotel. When he entered the office he looked for Old King Brady. To his surprise he saw that something exciting had occurred in the place since he went away. Knots of men were excitedly discussing something, the remnants of broken chairs lay on the floor, and servants were flying hither and thither. Surprised, Harry stepped up to the desk and asked: "What has happened?" The clerk glanced at him and gave a start. "Oh, say, is your name Glendon?" he asked. This was the name employed by the Bradys on the road. "Yes," replied Harry. The clerk took a letter down and gave it to him. "Here is something for you," he said.

CHAPTER VII.

RUN DOWN.

Harry saw that it was Old King Brady's handwriting on the envelope. Of course, he was surprised. But he broke the seal. Thus the note read:

"HARRY: There has been a regular circus here since you went out. Some time after you had gone a man came in and tried to pass a check at the desk. I recognized him as New-

man, and arrested him. But he got the best of me and knocked me senseless and got away. I am after the automobile and shall give chase. He has skipped out with a stolen team and gone toward Blackville. Come to the stable at once.

"Yours O. K. B."

It is hardly necessary to say that Harry acted promptly. "Is our bill settled?" he asked of the clerk. "It is, sir." Harry waited for no more. He dashed out into the street. Just then around the corner came the automobile. Old King Brady sat in it. Harry hailed him and at once leaped in. "Good!" cried the old detective. "I am glad you came back in time. I was afraid I'd have to go off without you." "Not a bit of it," said the young detective. "United we stand and divided we fall in this case." "That is true. There is work for both of us." Away dashed the automobile. Old King Brady knew that the drummer had gone out by the main street of the town. There was no turn for several miles. He let the automobile out. It was a dark night, but yet enough of the road could be seen to make fast driving safe. It had been a great surprise to the old detective when Newman stepped up to the hotel counter. The drummer had not for a moment suspected that a foe was so near. Old King Brady had never dreamed of such vigorous resistance, else he would have been prepared for it. As it was, Newman, swift as lightning, knocked the old detective down with a chair. It was then easy for him to rush out of the office. On the street was a great crowd of passersby. He might have been caught had he attempted escape in that direction. But at the curb stood a horse and wagon. The owner was in a nearby store. The villain did not consider propriety, but leaped into the carriage and whipped up the horse. Out of the town he dashed at breakneck speed. He was seen to take the turnpike road to Blackville. That would undoubtedly be his objective point, for there he could get a train and soon be beyond pursuit. But Old King Brady knew that the automobile could overtake any horse in the country. So he hoped to yet run his man down. Out into the country dashed the detectives in hot pursuit of their bird. On ran the automobile like an express train. Down hills and through level stretches, around sharp corners and through patches of woodland sped the machine. Harry strained his gaze into the darkness ahead to see if he could catch a glimpse of the team. And suddenly he exclaimed: "There it is, just ahead!" Old King Brady leaned forward in the automobile. It was the saving of his life. For just then there was the sharp report of a pistol, a flash of light, and a bullet whistled over his head. The old detective set his teeth hard. "Ah!" he muttered. "That's the game, is it?" Harry leaned forward and shouted: "If you fire again, we shall do the same." The warning was evidently heeded, for there was not a second shot. The villain had completely changed his tactics. Suddenly and without warning the carriage diverged into a dense thicket. The horse, driven beyond his strength, went plunging and crashing into the undergrowth. The team was a wreck. The detectives stopped the automobile and leaped out. Into the bushes they dashed in mad haste. But they were too late. The villain was not to be found. It had been easy for him to slip away into the darkness and make good his escape. No amount of search on the part of the detectives resulted in finding the slightest trace of him. For a long while they pursued the quest. At length, completely baffled, they returned to the road. "That is too bad," said Old King Brady. "He has again given us the slip."

"Hard luck!"

"I should say so."

"What shall we do?"

This was the question.

Of course, the villain would be more than ever on his guard after this. It might be months ere they got again upon his track.

For the Bradys knew that they had to deal with the wildest and most desperate of rascals.

However, they started the automobile away down the road.

Day was now beginning to dawn.

The Bradys kept on for some ways. Then they turned into a cross road.

This brought them back into a part of the country near the spot where Newman had slipped them.

It was now broad daylight.

An old-fashioned farm-house loomed up to view at a bend in the road.

Just then an open carriage drove out of the yard.

It held two occupants.

The horse was white.

The occupants of the wagon were a well-dressed man and an old farmer with gray beard and slouch hat.

Harry gave a sharp cry.

"Do you see!" he shouted. "There is our man!"

This was true.

It was Newman, the drummer!

Just then Newman turned and saw the automobile.

The expression on his face was not good to see.

He spoke to the farmer, who cut the horse sharply with the whip.

Away dashed the white nag at full speed down the highway.

Old King Brady smiled grimly.

"Now, Harry!" he exclaimed. "This is our chance!"

"Good!" agreed the young detective. "He shall not escape us this time."

It could be seen that Newman had a revolver and, looking back several times, he menaced the detectives.

Just here the road was narrow.

But presently it broadened.

Then Old King Brady put on speed.

The automobile shot forward and was alongside.

Try as he would, the farmer could not get away from the automobile containing the two detectives. They drew up alongside and Young King Brady grasped the arm of the villain just as he was about to fire.

"Blame you!" hissed Newman. "I'll never be taken alive!"

He tried to wrench himself free from Harry's grip.

But the young detective held on with all his strength and pulled the villain half into the automobile.

Old King Brady had all he could do to steer the vehicle.

So he was unable to render assistance.

"Don't give him up, Harry!" he cried. "Hang on to him!"

"You're right, I will!"

"Ah, look out!"

Automobile and team had been furiously running side by side.

Suddenly the road narrowed and made a sharp curve.

It was a question at once of the survival of the fittest.

But the odds seemed in favor of the automobile.

Old King Brady saw the peril and did all in his power to avert it.

He shut off the power and applied the brakes.

The farmer tried to pull up his frenzied horse.

But it was too late.

Automobile and wagon collided. There was a grinding crash, the air was filled with debris, and Harry, still hanging to his man, went over into the midst of it.

The farmer went sailing over the fence.

The horse cleared the shafts and fled into the bushes.

Harry and Newman were half buried in the debris. The automobile ran on into the undergrowth before Old King Brady could stop it.

All had happened in a very short space of time.

When Old King Brady leaped out to go to Harry's assistance, he saw that the exigency was past.

The young detective had Newman hors de combat and was placing the handcuffs on him.

The farmer was striking out for safety in a distant field. All was ended.

"Well, partner, we have the game!" cried Harry, as he struggled to his feet.

Newman emitted a volley of oaths and said:

"You never made a bigger mistake in your lives!"

"What do you mean?"

"You will soon find out."

"Explain yourself!"

"Are you not detectives?"

"Yes."

"The Bradys?"

"Aye."

"Well, why didn't you tell me that before. I thought you were thugs trying to take my life. You've spoiled my game and I've spoiled yours!"

The detectives were puzzled.

"What are you driving at?" asked Old King Brady, tersely.

"This!" said Newman, shaking off his wig. "Now do you know me?"

It was not the crook, Newman, whom the detectives had in limbo. It was Elbert Kane!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

The chagrin and anger of the two detectives can hardly be described.

"You!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

"Yes, I!"

"What does this mean?"

"It means that you have spoiled my game."

"Well, who are you, and what are you masquerading thus for?"

Kane laughed sardonically.

"You thought I was Newman, didn't you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Very keen detectives you are. You see your foolish mistake."

For a few moments the Bradys were silent.

It took time for them to fully grasp the situation.

Then Old King Brady's face hardened.

"Don't take those bracelets off, Harry," he said.

Kane's eyes glittered.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"You heard what I said."

"Fools! Do you mean to keep me a prisoner?"

"Yes."

"And let the real criminal escape? Let me go, I say! I'll have the right man behind bars in an hour's time."

"Where is Newman?" asked Old King Brady, quietly.

"If I told you, you would know," sneered the villain, for such the detective believed him to be.

"If you are honest you will tell us."

"You want to claim all the credit of the capture," sneered Kane.

Look here. Why are you masquerading in this fashion?"

"For my own purposes."

"Only a short while ago you were in the hotel office at Newington, were you not?"

"I was."

"Why did you resist when I tried to arrest you, thinking that you were really Newman? Why have you led us this long chase?"

This was a poser.

For a moment the wily rascal was at a loss for a reply.

Then he grinned sardonically.

"That's hard for you to see, isn't it?" he said. "Well, the truth is, it was all for a bluff."

"A bluff?"

"Yes."

"I can hardly see the force of it."

"Well, you felt it, didn't you?" remarked Kane, jeeringly.

"Only the first effects. You are feeling the after effects."

Kane scowled, and tried to rid himself of the handcuffs.

"Are you going to take these off?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"You are a fool."

"Perhaps so."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to take you down to the Tombs in New York city," replied Old King Brady.

"What for?"

"A criminal hearing. I believe you are the Newman who has been traveling about the country forging checks and swindling people."

Kane glared at the detectives. He was shrewd enough to see, however, that Old King Brady was in earnest.

His manner changed.

He grew supplicant and much more tractable. He laughed pleasantly and said:

"Well, it's all a good joke. If I had known who you were in the hotel office, I wouldn't have knocked you down. Now, the truth is this: A pal of Newman's was present and I had won his confidence. He wanted some money and got me to impersonate Newman so as to pass the forged check.

"If our plan had succeeded we were to join Newman at a point just below here, and then my chance would come."

"A very plausible story," said Old King Brady. "But there are discrepancies. There is only one thing for you to do."

"What?"

"Take us to that place where you were to meet Newman."

Kane winced at this.

"He would not be there," he said. "He would be forewarned of our approach."

"If your story is true, you will not refuse to do what I ask of you."

"I absolutely refuse."

"Then you are guilty."

"Of what?"

"Of a long list of crimes. Of forgery and swindling, and I believe of murder."

"Murder?"

Kane's face turned livid.

"That is false!" he whispered, hoarsely. "Blame you! Let me go!"

But the detectives turned the automobile about. They placed Kane in it, and started back to Newington.

When they arrived there they created a genuine sensation.

People crowded about the automobile, and the detectives had hard work to commit their prisoner to the care of local officers.

He was placed in the local jail temporarily, and the Bradys went back to the hotel.

It was arranged to ship the automobile back to New York, while they would go down on the cars with their prisoner.

So the detectives went back to their room at the hotel.

Here they held a consultation.

In cases so puzzling as this it was a relief to fall back upon easy deduction.

The Bradys did this.

They reviewed the case carefully, and weighed all its salient points.

"I'll own up that I am beaten," said Old King Brady, finally.

"How so?"

"Well, if Kane has been masquerading as Newman, what has become of the drummer himself?"

Harry was thoughtful.

"Perhaps he is in hiding."

"In hiding?"

"Yes."

"If he is innocent why should that be?"

"Easy enough. Kane has incriminated him and he knows that he cannot clear himself."

"Then with Kane's arrest he should appear and vindicate himself."

"Perhaps he will."

"Until we find him, or ascertain his fate, we can make no kind of a case against Kane."

"That is true."

"It is known that he was Kane's rival in love."

"Yes."

"Very good. He has invented and furthered this whole plot to ruin Newman's character. Now perhaps Newman dare not show his head, and again——"

"What?"

"Perhaps he is not alive to do so."

"Ah!" said Harry, with a deep breath. "The plot thickens."

"Indeed it does. It is hard for me to see any other guilty party than Kane now."

"I agree with you."

"But Newman——"

"We must find."

"Or learn his fate."

"Yes."

"We will make that our business first of all."

"Indeed we will."

With this decision the detectives went downstairs.

They learned that a train left for New York that night at eleven.

They would call at the jail for their prisoner at that hour and take him with them.

The report that Newman, the drummer, had been arrested was spread far and wide.

People thronged the streets before the jail to get a glimpse of him.

Finally, a short while before eleven, the Bradys drove up to the entrance to the jail.

They were met by the sheriff, who showed them into the waiting-room.

"I will send the turnkey for your man," he said.

Some time elapsed.

Then hurried footsteps were heard, and with white face and trembling limbs, the sheriff burst into the room.

"Mercy on us!" he cried. "The worst has happened! Our prisoner is gone!"

"Gone!" ejaculated Old King Brady.

"Yes. He is not in his cell. He must have escaped."

The Bradys were staggered.

They rushed through the jail corridor to the cell of the villain. There they saw the truth.

A bar in the cell door had been twisted, as if by superhuman power. The cell was empty.

The trail of the escaped prisoner was easily followed.

Through the passage he had crept to the bell tower. He had unhinged the door to this, and then descended to the basement on the bell rope.

Thence he had crept through the jail laundry and crawled through a broken window.

This had given him freedom, and here the trail ended.

Which direction he had taken or where he had gone could only be guessed.

Until morning the Bradys pursued their quest.

But Elbert Kane was gone.

What was to be done?

This was the question.

The Bradys had never been more bitterly disappointed in their lives. They were utterly at a loss for a plan.

All the next day they scoured the region in their automobile.

But it was in vain.

At night of the next day they abandoned the quest.

"Let him go!" said Old King Brady. "He is a fugitive. He can never hope to win the hand of Daisy Swallow now, so in that far his game is a failure."

"You are right," agreed Harry. "But what shall we do?"

"I think we had better change our plans entirely. I am going to look for Newman himself."

"That is what we have been doing right along."

"No, we have been following an ignis fatuus. This villain has led us a blind chase. Before we go further we must learn the fate of Newman."

"Very well. How shall we proceed?"

"He was last heard of at White Creek?"

"Yes."

"Then we will go back there and look for a fresh clew. If he has been foully dealt with, there must be traces of him there somewhere."

Harry readily agreed to this. So the detectives proceeded at once to White Creek.

The case now rapidly assumed new and startling features.

CHAPTER IX.

AN OEDURATE FATHER.

When the detectives reached White Creek, almost the first person they met was the chief of the local police.

"Hello, Brady!" he said, shaking hands with Old King Brady. "Are you still looking for that drummer, Newman?"

"Yes," replied the old detective.

"Well, you are just the man I want to see. Probably I can put you onto something."

"Good!" cried Old King Brady, with delight. "What is it, Lovejoy?"

"Come down to headquarters."

Lovejoy, the Chief of Police, led the way to his office.

Here he furnished seats for the visitors.

He lowered the cover of his desk and took from a compartment a small package.

He handed it to Old King Brady.

"Look at it!" he said.

The old detective opened the package. It contained a soiled handkerchief, a water-stained memorandum and several badly decipherable envelopes.

"Do you see how these articles are marked?"

Old King Brady started.

On the envelopes was the hardly legible name of Sam New-

man. The handkerchief had the same stamp and the memorandum was likewise marked.

"Where did you get these?" asked Old King Brady.

"A small boy brought them to me."

"Where did he find them?"

"On a sandbar in the river, below the Three Mile Bridge."

Old King Brady's eyes dilated. He gazed at Harry and then again at Lovejoy.

"These have been in the water some time," he said.

"Yes."

"Have you searched or dragged the river down there?"

"No."

Old King Brady sprang up.

"It must be done at once!" he said.

Lovejoy was astonished.

"What is the use of that?" he asked.

"Perhaps the drummer's body is in the river."

"That can't be. He has been seen and heard of since these articles were found. Very likely he threw them into the river to escape detection."

"Very likely not," said Old King Brady, emphatically. "Let me tell you, my friend, that the party seen and believed to have been Newman was not him at all."

The chief was astonished.

"What!" he gasped. "Do you mean that?"

"I do."

"Well, but——"

"It is easily explained. A rogue has been masquerading as Newman."

Then Old King Brady told his story. Lovejoy was excited.

"By jove!" he exclaimed. "It is easy to see through the whole game now. That Newman is an innocent man."

"Perhaps a victim of villainy."

"Just so."

"Now we will soon learn what was his fate. The river must be dragged."

"It shall be!"

It did not take long for Lovejoy and the detectives to carry out this plan.

They found river men ready to drag the river.

This was done carefully.

But the result was a disappointment. No further trace of the missing man was found.

If he had been thrown into the river the current had carried his body out to sea, or it was too deeply buried in the mud to be ever found.

Again the Bradys were baffled.

Days passed into weeks.

The autumn came and still no tidings. No clew turned up.

Kane had vanished into the mists of the past.

The Bradys had almost concluded to abandon the case as their first failure.

It looked as if the murder of Richard Dalton must go unavenged.

But at the last moment a revelation came.

The Bradys went down to New York on business and called at the Swallow residence.

They found Mr. Swallow stern and unrelenting. Daisy was white and wan.

She had almost given her lover up. But she was firmer than ever in her belief in his innocence.

And the disclosures regarding Kane seemed to confirm this all the more.

The detectives interviewed the young girl and were just about to take their leave when a servant entered with a letter.

Daisy at once opened it and began to read it.

Then a gasping cry escaped her and she seemed about to faint.

Recovering with a great effort, she handed the letter to Old King Brady.

"Read it!" she whispered.

The old detective took the missive.

He saw that it was written in a fair hand and on paper which bore a heading as follows:

"Whitman Asylum for the Insane, Whitman Hill, N. Y.

"DEAR MISS SWALLOW: Nearly a year ago there was brought to our asylum by the town overseers, an unfortunate victim of a mental malady. This derangement of the reason had been induced by a blow on the skull. The victim was found wandering in the woods in a wet and bedraggled condition. The injury which doubtless induced his insanity was the result of an assault or a fall, we do not know which.

"We have tried in vain to trace him and find out something about his friends. There are times when he talks of one who

bears the name you do. It occurred to us to look up all those of your name in the large towns of the State in the hope that the right person might be found.

"If you can assist us in any way to ascertain the origin of this unfortunate man we shall consider it a very kind favor to ourselves and to humanity.

"Very sincerely,

"J. A. CRAIG, M. D."

For a moment after reading this epistle there was silence.

White and excited, with short, sharp breathing, Daisy watched the two detectives.

"What do you think?" she asked, hoarsely.

"You must be very calm," said Old King Brady. "Do not hope for too much. Of course, there is a possibility."

"I shall go at once."

"Yes."

She started to leave the room.

"One moment," said Old King Brady.

"Well?"

"Let us go with you!"

"I shall esteem it a kindness."

"Very good!"

It was not long before she reappeared all equipped for the journey. It was learned that a train left within the hour for Whitman Hill.

Just as they were about to leave the house, Mr. Swallow appeared.

The millionaire had a clouded face and an angry air.

He faced the detectives.

"What is this?" he exclaimed. "Where are you going?"

"We are going on a little journey with your daughter," said Old King Brady.

Swallow's face flushed.

"I think I understand," he said. "I am no longer blind. I have been made a fool of by you fellows."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Old King Brady.

"You heard what I said!"

"Yes, but I do not understand."

"I have often heard it said that the detective is often a bigger rogue than the criminal himself."

"To whom do you refer?"

"You, if you choose!"

"But I don't choose," said Old King Brady. "You must substantiate your statements."

"I can and will."

"Pray do so!"

"I have evidence that you are in collusion with this scoundrel, this Newman who has excited such a hypnotic influence over my daughter."

This astounding declaration was a surprise to the Bradys.

"You have been misinformed, sir," replied Old King Brady.

"And I will prove to you that you are a very misguided old man."

"I will not listen to any of your smooth talk."

"But at least you will tell us how you have secured the information that we are in collusion with Newman."

"A friend, and one who has been a victim of your schemes, gave me the information, and it is reliable."

The detectives were surprised.

They exchanged glances.

The same word escaped their lips:

"Kane!"

Mr. Swallow gave a start. His face flushed, which was only a betrayal of his thoughts.

"Well," he said, "what have you to say to it? A denial will not serve you. Pretty work, indeed, to bring false charges against an innocent man and make him a fugitive from the law."

Old King Brady smiled grimly, while Harry slowly whistled.

"Well, well," said the young detective, "this is the richest thing I have heard of yet. Did you have a visit from Mr. Kane?"

"I may say that I have learned the truth from him."

"Well, he has made a dupe of you. Just let us get our hands on him."

"I hardly think you will," began Mr. Swallow, hotly.

But Old King Brady stepped forward.

"Look here, Mr. Swallow," he said, sternly, "you are both prejudiced and unwise. It ill behooves you to take this stand.

"I want to tell you that we are employees of the Secret Service, and our character cannot be impeached so lightly by such a man as Kane.

"We have evidence that he's the greatest rascal unhung. He is not only the scoundrel who, in the attempt to ruin Newman's

character in the eyes of your daughter and thus kill her love for him, has masqueraded as Newman during the commission of his crimes. but he is a murderer. It will be well for you to be careful how you shield such a rogue."

The millionaire's face was scarlet. He choked and stut-tered:

"It is all a black lie! I won't believe a word against Kane!"

CHAPTER X.

ON A NEW SCENT.

The detectives thought that they had never run up against a harder-headed or more obstinate man than Asa Swallow.

Old King Brady moved toward the door.

"It is very plain that argument is useless," he said.

"Yes!" thundered Swallow. "All argument of that sort is. I give you fair warning I am going to see the wrongs of this man righted, and you shall pay for your vile scheming."

He turned to Daisy.

"As for you, you silly jade," he cried, "go to your room and stay there. Unless you change your ideas very shortly I shall see what can be done for you in a private school."

The young girl's eyes were like stars.

"I resent your accusations," she said, proudly. "I am quite capable of caring for myself. I have been a good daughter, and now, for the first time in my life, I resist your authority."

Swallow grew apoplectic.

"What?" he roared. "You talk to me in such a way?"

"I will talk to you no longer, nor listen to you," she said, firmly, starting for the door.

The irate parent placed himself in front of her.

"Where are you going" he asked, almost savagely.

"That is my affair," she replied, with dignity.

"Your affairs are mine."

"Not in this instance. You have seen fit to antagonize my best interests."

"You are a blind, mad fool!" cried the millionaire. "You shall not go from this house."

"You shall not detain me."

"Where do you intend going?"

"That is my affair."

"You shall tell me."

Old King Brady stepped forward.

"I am sure she will not refuse to answer that question," he said.

"No," said Daisy, quietly. "I will tell you. I am going to find Sam."

"To find him?"

"Yes."

"Then you know where he is? I dare say you have known right along."

"To the contrary, I have not," replied the young girl. "I would be less than human, though, if I did not go in this case. If you wish further light on the subject, perhaps this will give it to you."

She gave him the letter which she had received from the asylum.

Mr. Swallow took it and read it carefully. Still the scowl did not leave his face.

"And you place credence in this?" he sneered.

"I do."

"Well, how do you know that it is not a sharp game or trick? I tell you, I am not to be deceived."

"Mr. Swallow," said Old King Brady, "kindly listen to reason. You are deceived. You have been made the victim of a rascal."

"Yes, I have."

"You admit it?"

"I do, but the rascal is no other than Sam Newman."

"You seem to have unbounded faith in Elbert Kane."

"I do, for I know that he is an honest and worthy fellow."

"If the opposite was proved to you, what then?"

"You cannot prove it."

"What if we take you to this asylum and find Newman there, and it is proved that he has been the victim of a plot? Will it not prove conclusively that he could not have committed the forgeries and swindles charged to him?"

"You'll not find him there."

"At least you will suspend judgment until you learn the truth?"

"Well," admitted the millionaire, "of course there is a possibility that you may be right. But I tell you," he cried,

fiercely turning to Daisy, "you must give that Newman up. And I won't believe anything against Elbert. See?"

"Well, well," laughed Old King Brady. "If all friends were as loyal as you, Mr. Swallow, the world would be much better."

"I have faith in Elbert."

"It is a pity to shatter it."

"It will not be shattered."

"Well, then, you agree to go with us to Whitman Hill?"

Swallow hesitated.

Then he said:

"It is agreed."

In a few moments he was ready, and joined Daisy and the detectives.

His manner changed very greatly as they made their way to the depot. Sober reflection showed him that perhaps he had been a trifle hasty.

A train was boarded, and soon they were on their way to Whitman Hill.

In due time they alighted at the small station.

They had telegraphed their coming, so that a carriage was in readiness for them at the station.

They were driven at once to the asylum.

They seated themselves in the reception room, and in due time Dr. Craig appeared.

He greeted them warmly, and said:

"The patient seems in a more composed mood this morning. In fact, there are signs of mental recovery."

"I hope the shock of our visit will not affect him," said Old King Brady.

"Oh, I think not."

Dr. Craig now led the visitors through a corridor.

On either side were cells in which were patients of a more or less violent character.

At length the party paused before a cell door.

It opened and they entered.

Sitting on the edge of a couch was the wreck of a once handsome young man.

He gazed at the visitors blankly.

"He is never violent," said Dr. Craig. "I hope you may be able to identify him."

The detectives stepped aside.

Daisy took a step forward.

Then a great cry escaped her lips. Before any one could detain her she flung herself into the arms of the unfortunate man.

"Oh, Sam! Sam!" she cried, wildly. "Thank heaven, you are alive! Oh, don't you know me?"

The benighted man started like one coming out of a dream.

He held the young girl's form in his arms, a wild, strange light in his eyes. He seemed to listen.

"Oh, Sam!" cried the young girl again. "Don't you know me?"

Mr. Swallow had taken a step forward as if to restrain his daughter.

But now he paused.

He was very pale.

"It is Sam!" he exclaimed. "What does it all mean?"

"It means that all this is the work of that scoundrel, Elbert Kane," said Old King Brady.

But Dr. Craig, who had been closely watching the insane man, now put up his hand.

"It is coming!" he said. "Just as I hoped."

A great shudder seemed to run over the figure of Newman.

He passed a hand across his brow, looked about him in a bewildered way, and then said:

"What is this? How did I come here? Is it you, Daisy?"

"Thank heaven! He knows me!" cried the young girl. "He will come back to reason, and to life and light."

"Yes," said Dr. Craig. "He will certainly recover."

Mr. Swallow broke down completely.

"That settles it," he declared. "I never would have believed that Elbert could be such a scoundrel."

While Newman recognized his friends, he was by no means out of his difficulty.

"That will come with a slight operation," said Dr. Craig. "There is a slight pressure on the brain. When that is removed, you will find that he will recover."

It was late in the day when the party took the train back to New York.

Perhaps the happiest of young girls that day was Daisy Swallow.

Her lover was vindicated, and she was content.

He was to remain at Whitman Hill until after the operation, and a cure had been effected.

Then he was to return to New York, and the Swallow mansion was to be his home.

"After which," said Mr. Swallow, "I will make no promises. But I have often longed for a son."

The Bradys began to feel that the case was nearing its end. To be sure, Kane was yet at large.

But Mr. Swallow had promised to assist in his capture, and this it was believed would be an easy matter.

There was absolute proof now that Kane had been the means of Newman's disappearance.

How he had decoyed him to the bridge, struck him on the head and thrown him into the river was all very clearly shown.

There seemed but one more thing to be done.

This was to capture Kane.

The detectives realized that it would be no easy task.

Kane caught the alarm and did not dare to return to keep his appointment with Mr. Swallow.

He had betrayed himself.

Henceforth he was a fugitive.

But the Bradys were not in the least daunted.

They kept busily at work, and finally got what they believed was a clew.

Kane had not attempted to leave the country.

Now that his true character was exposed he no longer made any attempt to carry the game further.

He was heard from as one of a gang of crooks which infested the East Side.

So well was he shielded and protected by this gang of evil-doers that the Bradys were wholly unable to get at him.

But they set to work with all their might. From one place to another they tracked him.

Then at the last moment they got sight of their man.

It was only a glimpse.

The two detectives were strolling through a low quarter of Hester street one day, when Old King Brady clutched Harry's arm.

CHAPTER XI.

TRACKING THE CROOKS.

"There is our man," he said. "Do you see him?"

The young detective gave a start.

He saw a man emerge from an Italian barber shop just across the street.

But it was not Kane.

It was, however, one of his new found pals, a confidence crook known as Leo Rollins.

It was something to the detectives to even get track of this fellow.

"It is Rollins!" said Harry, with a start.

"That is so!"

"Ah, we will follow him!"

"Indeed we will."

"It is safe to assume that Kane is not far away."

"That is true."

The Bradys proceeded to shadow their man.

Luck was with them.

Thus far every attempt to shadow one of the shrewd gang of crooks had proved a failure.

Some sharper would be sure to fall in behind them and shadow them in turn. The warning would be given and the birds take to cover.

But in this case Rollins was plainly alone.

He made his way along the street at a rapid pace.

The detectives noted one fact.

He carried a small yellow traveling satchel.

"He is traveling," said Harry.

"Where?"

"That remains to be seen."

"If that is the case, then the others are doing the same."

"Yes."

The Bradys kept closely at the heels of Rollins.

He took a car on Third avenue to go uptown. The detectives boarded the same car.

As far as Forty-second street they rode.

Rollins made his way to the Grand Central depot.

He bought a ticket.

Harry jostled up behind him and read the name on the ticket. It gave him a mighty start.

It read:

"Whitman Hill."

Harry at once purchased two tickets for the same place. He soon rejoined Old King Brady.

"Well?" asked the old detective.

"By Jove! I can tell you there is mischief afoot."

"What do you mean?"

"See these tickets?"

"What? Is that where he is going?"

"Sure!"

The two detectives stared at each other.

Then Old King Brady said:

"Are these disguises all right?"

It chanced that they were made up as rustics. Nothing could be better.

The detectives watched Rollins. Soon they were seated in the train.

Old King Brady was puzzled.

"I don't see what he is going to Whitman Hill for."

"Something is up."

"What can it be?"

"We shall see."

After a while Old King Brady took a small mirror from his pocket.

By means of it he secretly inspected the occupants of the car in his rear.

Then he whispered:

"On my word, Harry, it looks pretty warm for us."

"What do you mean?"

"There are four of the gang besides Rollins in the car."

Harry was astounded.

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I declare! Is there going to be a convention at Whitman Hill?"

"It looks like it."

"Is Kane with them?"

"No."

After a period of silent thought, Harry again whispered:

"I have an idea."

"What?"

"Do you suppose this visit to Whitman Hill has anything to do with the insane asylum?"

"And Newman?"

"Just so."

Old King Brady looked grim.

"Perhaps they mean to make sure of him this time," he said.

"That is what I thought."

"Well, in that case——"

"We will be in at the finish."

"I should rather guess!"

The detectives were deeply thrilled. They were sure that hot work was before them.

In due time the train stopped at Whitman Hill.

As the detectives had seen, Rollins was not alone.

Four other crooks left the train.

They now joined forces on the station platform and held a consultation. It was evident that they believed the coast clear.

They did not dream that their two most hated foes were close behind them.

Then they left the platform and struck out along the country highway.

It was fast growing dark.

The crooks walked on through a narrow road leading right away from the town.

As they walked on it grew darker. The night was cloudy and the darkness became intense.

The Bradys followed them like sleuth-hounds.

After a while the crooks halted in a little patch of forest.

Then they vanished.

When the detectives reached the spot a moment later not a sign of them was to be found.

They made a long and wide search.

In the darkness they could find no trail.

They were baffled.

An hour was consumed thus.

"Well, this won't do," said Old King Brady. "They will slip us. Where can they have gone?"

"It is very queer."

"Well, I should say!"

"Is there a secret covert near here?"

"There must be."

"They could not vanish into thin air."

"By no means."

The detectives were more deeply chagrined than they cared to admit.

However, they kept on in their quest.

Time passed rapidly.

Back to the station they went, and then turned up the narrow road. Then they fell to watching.

But the crooks did not reappear. Thus the Bradys persevered until near midnight.

Then like a flash a thought came to Old King Brady.

"We are fools!" he declared.

"What?"

"We are giving them full leeway."

"What do you mean?"

"They've slipped us in some way, and, of course, they won't return here. If we can hope to do anything we must go to the asylum at once."

Harry sprang up.

"By Jove, that is so!"

The detectives were convinced that the asylum was to be the main theater of action.

So they at once started for that institution.

This was no easy jaunt.

They were some ways from the asylum, and the way led through a long maze of roads.

But they pressed on rapidly.

Suddenly both came to a startled halt.

Voices were heard.

Just ahead was a high board fence. This inclosed the asylum grounds.

The Bradys pressed close to the fence and listened.

But the voices grew fainter and died out entirely.

The detectives lost no time.

They found a broken paling in the fence, and made their way through it.

They were among a growth of larch trees which hid from them a view of the asylum.

Old King Brady now knelt down and placed his ear to the ground.

He listened intently.

Then like an Indian scout he arose and glided away through the forest of trees.

Harry followed him.

On went the detectives until suddenly the trees cleared and they came out upon an open space and the buildings of the asylum loomed up before them.

Here both detectives paused.

Suddenly Harry clutched Old King Brady's arm.

"Look!" he whispered.

Outlined against the sky was a tall human figure.

It was between them and the asylum. The two detectives watched it intently.

"Now we have the clew," whispered Harry. "That is one of the gang."

"Yes."

"What shall we do?"

"I wish we had brought a squad of officers with us. We could surround this place and capture them all."

"That is so."

As it is, they have the best of us. Two against six or eight is great odds."

However, the detectives were determined to do their best.

The purpose of the villains they could only guess.

It seemed to be to gain an entrance to the asylum.

That their plans concerned Newman there was no doubt.

The detectives now crept toward the figure between them and the asylum. But an unexpected thing happened.

This figure suddenly vanished.

This caused the detectives to go ahead at full speed. Suddenly there was a distant muffled sound, and then the crack of a pistol.

The bullet whistled past Harry's ears.

"Down!" cried Old King Brady, and down they sank.

They were none too soon.

Several shots whistled above them. Then the distant sound of hurrying footsteps was heard.

The Bradys did not venture to rise for some while.

Just as they were about to do so, an appalling sound burst upon the air.

It was the clangor of a bell.

The distant crash of window glass was heard with fearful cries.

They rose to their feet and dashed forward.

A glance was enough to tell the truth.

The windows of the asylum were fairly ablaze with light.

The cry which went up was:

"Fire! Fire!"

Nothing could be more terrible.

It was only necessary to think of the helpless souls within that blazing dwelling to fill one's being with awful horror.

"My soul!" gasped Old King Brady. "That is dreadful! It is the work of fiends."

"That is true!" cried Harry. "We must do all we can to help them."

"Newman must be saved!"

"We must do it!"

The game of the villains was now plainly revealed.

The Bradys regretted extremely that they had not taken more speedy action.

"We ought to have arrested them on the train," he said.

"But we had no charge against them."

"That is true."

The detectives stumbled on with all haste. Now they had reached the graveled driveway.

In another moment they were in the throng of villagers which had so quickly gathered.

Many of the inmates of the asylum were being taken out through the lower doors.

But those on the upper floors seemed doomed.

There was no way to reach them.

Locked in their cells they were of course wholly unable to help themselves.

Certainly a more terrible situation could not be conceived.

The Bradys found Dr. Craig in a fearful state of mind.

The good doctor was nigh prostrated with the horror of the situation.

"There are fully twenty patients on the second floor whom we cannot reach," he said. "They must perish!"

"Is there no way to save them?" asked Old King Brady.

"No way I can devise!"

"If one could reach that floor and open the cell doors——"

"They might leap for their lives."

"So I think!"

"But—the trouble is to get to the second floor!"

"Are there no ladders?"

"Yes, but the wall on that side is so hot that an ascent cannot be made safely."

"Pshaw! We will see!" cried the old detective. "Something must be done."

"I wish it could!"

"Where is the patient Newman?"

Dr. Craig groaned.

"My soul! He is on that floor," he said. "He was to undergo his operation of the skull to-day. I fear he will never escape!"

Old King Brady turned to Harry.

"My lad!" he said. "I am going to try the pass. If I fail, you have certain behests of mine to fulfil."

"Never!" cried the young detective. "I shall be the one to go!"

But Old King Brady pushed him aside.

"Do not trifle!" he said sternly. "You know I have no time."

"Then I shall go with you!"

Old King Brady hesitated.

"You do not fear to go?"

"No!"

"Perhaps two can work better than one. Very well, it shall be so!"

The two detectives left the crowd and rushed to the other end of the asylum.

Here they found a ladder.

It would not reach the second-story window.

But Old King Brady noted a leaning roof on the rear end of the building.

Some narrow windows opened out upon this.

The fire had not yet reached this part of the building.

"There is our chance!" he said.

The ladder was placed against the edge of the roof.

At this moment a couple of firemen came rushing up.

"No use!" they cried. "The interior will be gutted in five minutes."

"I don't believe it," said Old King Brady.

"You will tempt fate."

"All right! Let it be so. But look here."

"What?"

"Some of you fellows wait here for us to come out. We will have need of your assistance."

"I fear you will never need it," said the fireman.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLOCAUST.

The Bradys knew that the bell was that of the asylum. Something was wrong.

But Old King Brady was already on the ladder. Up he went. He reached the roof and crossed it. A blow destroyed the sash of the window. Then he vanished. Harry went quickly after him. When the detectives passed through the window they found themselves in a narrow corridor. The flames had not yet reached this part of the building. On either side were cells, but they contained no patients. Whoever had fired the building had used an exact knowledge of the location of the occupied cells. They had executed their fiendish work with a terrible exactness. The detectives pushed their way rapidly along this corridor. The sounds which reached their ears were appalling. Groans and shrieks and cries of agony and terror mingled with the roaring of the flames and the terrible crash of falling timbers. The sickening odor of burning flesh was in the air. On pushed the Bradys. They reached an angle in the corridor and the first door of a series of cells which contained patients. Old King Brady had provided himself with an axe. A blow destroyed the lock and the door swung open. The terrified lunatic rushed out and Harry steered him for the open window at the end of the corridor. Cell after cell was thus emptied. Most of the patients had instinct enough to seek self-preservation. Harry forced them along the corridor to safety. But as he rushed from cell to cell Old King Brady thought of Newman. Dr. Craig had said there were twenty patients on this floor, and Newman was one of them. He had already liberated a dozen of the poor creatures. Suddenly he heard a sharp exclamation of joy. He turned and saw a familiar face pressed to the already heated bars of a cell. Flames were sending their slender tongues up the door frame and the smoke was becoming stifling. "Newman!" shouted the old detective. "Just in time!" A blow of the axe broke the lock. The imprisoned man staggered forth. There was no time for talk. Young King Brady caught him by the arm and all rushed for the window. The flames had gained sudden terrific headway and it seemed as if their escape would be cut off. "Too late!" gasped Harry, as he felt the floor begin to sink. But Old King Brady dragged them on. Another moment and they had reached the window ledge. Over it they leaped. They slid down the roof of the shed and were assisted down by the firemen. They were not a moment too soon. A great whirl of smoke and flame went up from the open window. Newman was taken in charge by Dr. Craig himself. All the insane patients rescued had been secured and were confined in a nearby building. But full half a score of the unfortunates lost their lives in the building. It was a dastardly deed. The town was stirred up with the atrocity of the affair, and search parties scoured the region about to get track of the incendiaries. But they had covered up their tracks well. Their escape was assured. The Bradys were the heroes of the hour. They had saved more than a dozen lives from the flames. They had beaten the villains at their game. The incendiaries had failed in their purpose to put Newman forever out of the way. But one thing was certain. They had made of themselves fugitives from justice forever. The brand of Cain was upon all of them. Newman was now removed to New York. Here he was placed in a special hospital and prepared for the operation which was to fully restore his reason to him. Meanwhile the Bradys had participated in some thrilling adventures. That very night, after the fire, they had made sure of Newman's safety, and then Old King Brady said: "Harry, we must leave nothing undone to capture those rascals!" "That is right, partner," agreed the young detective.

"We can do nothing more here!"
 "Not just now."
 "Let us, then, take the track of the scoundrels. Of course, they have made tracks for New York."
 "So I think."
 The detectives discussed the likeliest course to be pursued by the incendiaries. They decided finally that they would seek the railroad track. It was hardly likely they would venture to board a train. "How about the river?" asked Harry. "That would not be likely," said Old King Brady. "Now, suppose we secure a horse and drive across country and cut them off at White's, a town fifteen miles down the line?" "Capital idea!" agreed Harry.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON A NEW LEAD.

There was a livery stable in Whitman Hill, and it did not take the detectives long to secure a driver. Post haste they were driven out of town. When White's was reached, a point fifteen miles by road, but twenty by rail, it was in the gray light of dawn. The Bradys believed that they were on the right track. They were fully convinced that the incendiaries would try to make their way back to New York by way of the railroad track. "We will head them off," said Old King Brady, confidently. When White's was reached the old detective sought out the town constable. Four other men were impressed, and with this force the detectives lay in wait. The regular trains now began to run. The day was half spent before any verification of the detectives' suspicion was arrived at. Every train that passed through White's was searched. But it was plain that the villains were too shrewd to thus invite arrest. "They are either on the railroad track or the highway," declared Old King Brady. "That is the idea." As the highway and the railroad met here the chances for falling in with the crooks seemed good. A little past the noon hour two men apparently weary and foot-sore came along the track. That they were two of the incendiaries there was no doubt. The constable was eager to make their arrest. But Old King Brady said: "No not yet." "Why?" asked the eager officer. "We had better snap 'em up while we can." "Wait and see," said the shrewd old detective. And his judgment was seen to be good. For the two crooks, after looking about the little town, started back the way they came. "What did I tell you?" said Old King Brady, triumphantly. "They are only an advance guard. They came ahead to see if the coast was clear. The others will be here shortly." And the old detective's theory was verified. By following the crooks a ways up the track, they were seen to join three others. Leo Rollins was one of these. But the Bradys were disconcerted to see that the man they most wanted was not among them. This was Kane. Where the arch plotter had gone it was not easy to guess. However, it was the duty of the Bradys to secure these fellows if no more. Presently all five came boldly down the track. Soon they were in the little town. They at once steered into a barroom. The Bradys kept a close surveillance upon them. Rollins drank deeply, and the incendiaries seemed all in a reckless mood. No sign of Kane was there, nor did one of them speak his name. Finally Old King Brady said: "Well, constable, we might as well corral them." "All right, boss," agreed the officer. He signaled to his men, and they closed in about the party. Rollins suddenly turned to find a revolver at his head. "Well!" he ejaculated. "What is the meaning of this?"

"You are all prisoners," said the constable. "He who resists is a dead man."

"Under arrest!" gasped Rollins.

"Yes, sir."

"What for?"

"For incendiarism and murder."

"Murder!"

Rollins gave a start, but the revolver covered him.

"No use," said the constable. "You can't do it. You might as well give up."

Oaths of a frightful sort rolled from Rollins' lips.

The five ruffians were inclined to show resistance.

But the folly of this was very apparent.

They were compelled to yield.

"Handcuff them all!" cried the constable to his men. "This is the best day's work yet."

Tremendous excitement was created when it was known that these men were the incendiaries who had fired the Whitman Hill asylum.

They were murderers all.

There was talk of a lynching party.

But Old King Brady stopped it at once.

"These men are in the hands of the law," he said. "And the law will and must deal with them."

Word was telegraphed that the arrest had been made.

The Bradys were congratulated.

But they were not satisfied.

"We must find our man," declared Old King Brady. "The case is only just begun."

Kane was at large.

Rollins and his brother crooks were taken down to New York and placed in jail.

Old King Brady and Harry again started out on the trail of Kane once more.

It had been a shrewd move on the villain's part to keep away from his fellow crooks.

He had thus saved arrest. But he was yet a fugitive.

However, the detectives had no idea that he would give up the battle. His was too revengeful a nature.

So they were more persistent than ever in their efforts to track Kane down.

There was no doubt that the villain was possessed of money and resources.

He could easily have left the country and made himself forever safe from pursuit.

But that he had not done this the Bradys were sure.

For weeks the Bradys followed up every clew.

But in vain.

The villain kept easily out of their way.

Meanwhile Newman had succeeded in regaining his reason completely.

The surgical operation had been a success, and he was full on the road to recovery.

However, the Bradys heard from Kane at intervals, though they were unable to locate him.

They learned enough to assure them that he had openly adopted a career of crime.

He had connected himself with a gang of railroad crooks.

The ringleader of this gang was known as Spotty Clark.

Clark was of that type of crook who was always shrewd enough to keep just without the pale of justice.

Though he was the ringleader and always at the head of some gigantic conspiracy of crime, he was yet sharp enough to evade the law.

He had won the name of "Spotty" from the peculiar mottled state of his complexion.

A more merciless scoundrel never graced the face of the earth.

He traveled on all the great railroads and manipulated many shrewd deals.

But he always managed to evade the officers of the law.

The Bradys learned, after much patient research, that Kane had associated himself with Clark.

The detectives took up the new trail with gusto.

They traveled in the disguise of drummers from New York to Chicago, and thence to St. Louis, and many other points.

They met Clark at various points, and even associated with him in a quondam way, but yet Kane was always invisible.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Harry. "Sam the Shadow" was never half so slippery as this villain."

"That is so," agreed Old King Brady. "But our time will come."

And it did come.

The Bradys dropped off the St. Louis express one evening and went to the Planters' Hotel.

They registered as follows:

"Daniel Goldstein, Max Gottman, New York City."

They were ostensibly drummers a la mode. They carried sample cases and talked business constantly.

In the same hotel Spotty Clark and a couple of his confreres were found.

The detectives casually asked Clark if he played cards.

The crook stuck his thumbs in the arm-holes of his vest and asserted that he did.

"I would like to strike a game," said Old King Brady. "We are from Simon Goldbach & Co. We carry the finest line of ladies' lingerie in the world."

"Ah, glad to know you," said Clark, indolently. "My line is jewelry."

"Ah? I used to travel for an Attleboro house in that line."

"Attleboro," said Clark, contemptuously. "Yes, I know. But our line is high-grade."

"Just so," agreed the old detective. "I would not assume anything else."

"So you would like to strike a game, eh?" said Clark, with an assumption of interest.

"Well, anything to kill time," said Old King Brady.

Clark looked at the old detective critically.

Old King Brady tried to look as easy and innocent as possible.

The crook seemed satisfied, for he smiled and, lowering his voice, said:

"I have some friends who play occasionally. Come up to Room 48 at about ten o'clock."

"All right."

Old King Brady joined Harry a little later.

"We are in for it," he said. "I hope we will get onto something of value to-night."

"So do I," agreed Harry.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GAME OF CARDS.

The Bradys made all plans to keep the appointment with Clark.

They knew that he would have some of his friends with him.

Whether Kane would put in an appearance or not they could not guess.

But they sincerely hoped that such would be the case.

At the hour of ten that evening the Bradys therefore applied at the door of Room No. 48.

They tapped lightly on the door.

It was opened.

Clark stood on the threshold.

He looked nervously up and down the corridor and then whispered:

"Come in!"

The detectives entered.

The scene which met their gaze was an interesting one.

At a table sat two men of sleek appearance.

They were engaged in dealing cards. As the Bradys entered they started up.

"Gentlemen," said Clark, "allow me to introduce you. Mr. Goldstein and Mr. Gottman. This is Mr. Steel and Mr. Brown."

"Very happy!" said Old King Brady.

"The same!"

"You are fond of cards?"

"Yes, in a quiet way!"

"This is quiet enough."

"Indeed, it is charming. We are indebted to Mr. Clark."

"So are we!"

"You are on the road?"

"Yes."

"Business a little slack?"

"Not a bit of it. We've sold out and are waiting for new samples and quotations."

They all sat down to the table.

The cards were dealt.

"Shall I be banker?" asked Clark.

All agreed to this.

It was settled that the game should be limitless poker. Altogether the detectives were made to feel that they were in with high-rollers.

But they had provided for this.

They displayed huge rolls and wads of currency. Thousands of dollars were displayed.

But none of the bills were genuine. They were the cleverest of green goods.

The eyes of the crooks glittered.

Each seemed by glances to assure the other that they had an easy thing and a couple of greenhorns.

But mistakes are made.

They were destined to find this out to their sorrow.

The Bradys knew more tricks at cards than any one of them.

But they were not thinking of the cards or the game.

They kept the closest kind of a watch of the two men, Brown and Steel.

It was not long before the detectives became aware of a startling fact.

Both of these men were disguised.

Why was this?

While they were trying to find a reason the cards were dealt and the game began.

It progressed for some time quite evenly.

Both the detectives and the crooks won at intervals.

Then suddenly the luck seemed to veer in Clark's favor.

He won repeatedly.

It was easy for the detectives to see how this was.

He was aided by his confreres.

Tips were given by signal, and once a card was passed under the table.

It was a conspiracy to beat the two visitors.

This stirred Old King Brady to a species of anger.

His eyes burned with a deep light of determination.

He dealt the cards and backed his hand with a hundred-dollar bill of the green goods.

Clark raised him.

Steel and Brown stayed out.

Harry made a bluff to keep in the game, and then also withdrew.

The betting now began.

Clark threw in another hundred-dollar bill.

Old King Brady raised it.

Clark went higher.

The detective did the same.

The crook smiled coolly. He was satisfied that the drummer was only working a great bluff.

Again he raised it.

Old King Brady nonchalantly tossed five hundred into the heap.

Clark was staggered.

He stared at the detective.

"Humph!" he exclaimed. "You must be betting on a good hand!"

"I am!" replied the detective.

"I have a pretty good hand myself."

"I assume that you have."

Clark hesitated a moment.

"It will cost me five hundred to call you?"

"Yes."

The crook bit his lips.

A furious light shone in his eyes.

He instinctively felt that he was beaten.

He felt sure that Old King Brady had a good hand.

Yet he could not bear to think of losing the heap of money. To place five hundred more in the pile might be only that much more lost.

"Blame you!" he gritted. "Why did you raise it so high?"

Old King Brady smiled.

"That is part of the game," he said.

This was true.

With an oath Clark placed his five hundred in the pile.

"I call you!" he said.

Old King Brady placed his hand on the table.

It was a royal flush.

Clark laid his cards down. He had four nines.

His face was livid.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Old King Brady.

One moment the crook gazed at the pile of money. Then his eyes rolled and he sprang up.

"No, blame you!" he gritted. "You are a cheat! You shall never have that money!"

As he spoke he drew a long, murderous knife.

He acted quickly.

But Old King Brady was quicker.

The old detective's right arm went up.

In his hand was a gleaming revolver. The muzzle looked Clark full in the face.

"Two to one in my favor," said Old King Brady, with a gentle

smile. Steel and Brown sat motionless. Harry did the same.

For a moment Clark stood motionless, looking into the revolver.

His face was swollen with rage, but he saw that the odds against him were by far too great.

He lowered the knife.

"Well," he said, vengefully, "you are ahead just now, but the time will come when you will not be."

Old King Brady smiled.

"Put up your knife," he said.

Clark did so.

The detective then placed his revolver in his pocket.

Then he reached forth and divided the heap of money.

He raked out the greenbacks he had staked and made a separate pile of Clark's money.

Then he said:

"Now we are even. Take your money."

Clark gave a start of amazement. He looked at him incredulously. Steel and Brown did the same.

"What is that!" exclaimed the crook. "Are you crazy?"

"I think not!"

"Do you mean for me to take my money back?"

"I do!"

"Why?"

"Because I cheated you!"

Too astonished for utterance, Clark gaped at the old detective. Finally he managed to say:

"Well, you are a queer one! You cheated me, then you tell me of it and give me my money back?"

"Is not that fair?"

"Why, of course!"

"Are you not satisfied?"

Clark's hands closed greedily over the money.

"I am if you are," he said. "But what did you cheat for if you didn't mean to win the money?"

"I cheated you because you did. It was the only way I could beat you!"

"I cheated?"

For a moment amazement succeeded anger and then fear in Clark's face.

He stared at the detective.

But Old King Brady's steady gaze pierced him through and through.

"I did not cheat!" he began.

"Stop!" said the old detective. "Perjure yourself no further. You know you did. I saw you substitute another card for one of those nines of which you then had four!"

Guilt showed in every feature of Clark's face.

But he blustered:

"Well, that's part of the game. You cheated and, of course, I had to. Everybody cheats at cards."

"Well," said Old King Brady, "I think under the circumstances we better terminate this game!"

"As you please!" agreed Clark. "We are even!"

"Yes, so far as cards are concerned."

"What do you mean?" asked Clark, curtly.

"Just what I said."

"Who are you?" he gritted. "If I thought——"

"What?"

"That you were detectives—blame you, you'd never leave this room alive!"

Both detectives affected a boisterous laugh.

"Well, well!" they cried. "The idea of such a thing."

"Yes, but it may be true."

"Then who are you?" demanded Old King Brady. "And why do your friends here wear disguise? Are they also detectives?"

At this, Brown and Steel leaped to their feet.

It was a striking tableau.

The three villains glared at Old King Brady and Harry.

In that moment the detectives knew that they were forcing matters to a certain climax. What the result would be remained to be seen.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH IS THE END.

"Look here!" demanded Clark. "How do you know these men are disguised?"

"Bah! Any fool can see that!" said Old King Brady.

"So you think they are detectives?"

"I didn't say that!"

"Well, what do you think of them?"

"I think they are crooks!"

"Crooks!"

Sharp exclamations escaped the three villains, and they made a movement forward.

But Old King Brady held them with his revolver.

"Hold on!" he said, with an easy laugh. "Doubtless you can see that I am not such a fool as I look. Well, I am dead onto you. But that is all right, I don't interfere with you!"

"Oh, you don't?" said Clark, with a breath of relief.

"No, I don't meddle with you at all," said Old King Brady, carelessly. "I just wanted you to know that I am onto you!"

"Then you do not intend to set the officers of the law upon us?"

"Ha-ha-ha! Well, I think not. I am on the road myself."

"Ah! What is your line?"

"Anything that comes handy. But I don't make my coin out of my own kind."

Clark uttered several oaths softly.

"Well, we didn't know who you were," he said. "If we had we'd never have tried it. We thought you a pair of green-horns."

"We are not so green as we look."

"Of course not. But, I say, are we going to be friends now?"

"Of course."

They shook hands over the table; Brown and Steel did the same.

"Now, if we had a chance we'd drink to better health!" cried Old King Brady. "But, I say, I never knew but one man who is a bigger rogue at cards than you!"

"Ah!" said Clark. "I'd like to know him."

"Did you ever hear of Elbert Kane?"

Steel and Brown recoiled. Clark turned a shade paler.

Old King Brady saw that he had hit the mark.

"Ah!" he said. "I can see that you know him!"

"Well," said Clark, "do you also know him?"

"Indeed I do!" said Old King Brady. "I know there's a price on his head. Is not that enough?"

"I should say so. But I tell you they'll never catch Kane!"

"Don't be too sure. Where is he now?"

Clark let slip the reply before he had taken second thought.

"He's right in this vicinity now!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the old detective, quickly. "I want to see him. I have important news for him!"

The three villains exchanged glances.

"Let me have it," said Brown; "I'll take it to him."

"To the contrary," said Old King Brady, "I cannot do that. I must see him personally."

There was a moment of silence.

Then Clark spoke.

"You see the position we are in?" he asked.

Old King Brady nodded.

"Well, you will understand that Elbert has to use the greatest of care. We must know all about you before we trust you."

"I can tell you no more about myself. My name is Goldstein, and I am a drummer."

"We will take you to Kane and you can talk with him."

"Good!"

"But at the least sign of treachery—you understand, it is death!"

Old King Brady laughed.

"Spare your threats," he said. "They do not terrify me."

Clark looked at his watch.

"It is past midnight," he said. "And too late to visit Elbert to-night, but if you will meet me at ten to-morrow night at the landing of the Natchez and Gulf steamers on the levee, I will take you to see him."

"Very good!" agreed Old King Brady.

"Then for to-night we are done."

"Yes."

Clark went to the door and unlocked it.

"Good-night, gentlemen," he said.

"Good-night!"

The Bradys passed out.

They proceeded down the corridor to the next turn.

Here they waited and listened.

But nobody came out of Clark's room.

A short while later the detectives crept to the keyhole and listened.

All was dark within and the snore of a sleeper was heard.

Old King Brady turned away and whispered:

"The coast is clear for to-night. It looks as if the game was in our hands. Let us go to bed."

The two detectives retired to their own rooms.

Here, as they were undressing, some few deductions were made.

"What do you think?" asked Harry. "Is that appointment for to-morrow night all straight?"

"I think so."

"I suspected that one of those two rascals in disguise was our man. What do you think?"

"I hardly think so. I looked them over very closely. Neither was exactly of Kane's build."

"Ah! Is that true?"

"It was my conclusion."

"And you think we will really be able to meet Kane to-morrow night?"

"Yes."

"But—how shall we trap him?"

"What do you mean?"

"Will they not have him closely guarded and surrounded?"

"No doubt. But we can easily meet them at their own game."

"Ah, I see!"

"We will have half the police force of St. Louis about the landing on the levee. I will have boats all ready on either side. There can and shall be no escape!"

"Good! Now for some sleep."

The detectives tumbled into bed and were soon sound asleep.

They were astir at an early hour the next day.

They went down to breakfast and saw Clark and his confederates in the smoking-room.

The Bradys decided to keep a close watch upon them.

"It will be better to shadow them," said Old King Brady.

"They may change their minds and decide to skip."

"That is right!"

So this was done.

But the three crooks did not leave the hotel until evening. Then a queer thing happened.

They vanished almost as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed them up.

Never had the Bradys been so completely outwitted.

"Well," declared Old King Brady, "they have fooled us in good shape. There is now only one thing left to do."

"What?"

"We must keep that appointment to-night."

"But what if they don't keep it?"

The old detective made up a wry face.

"That will be hard enough," he said. "We shall have to begin all over again."

There was nothing else to be done, however.

So Old King Brady went to police headquarters and arranged for a score of officers.

These he distributed about the levee in the best fashion.

Then the detectives awaited developments.

At ten o'clock all was dark and quiet on the Natchez and Gulf landing.

The detectives crept cautiously among the bales of cotton and piles of merchandise heaped about.

They were armed and watchful, for it was necessary to be on guard against a trap.

Suddenly a dark figure came hurtling out of the darkness in Old King Brady's rear.

The old detective heard the footstep, faint as it was, and turned like a flash.

Crack!

A yell of pain went up.

What followed, baffles description.

It was easy enough for the detectives to see that they had walked into a trap.

A sharp whistle went up, and dark forms came swarming over the cotton bales.

It was a plot to murder the detectives. Old King Brady now did not regret his precaution in having officers on hand.

He placed a whistle to his lips and blew a shrill blast.

The officers closed in with a rush. A terrific battle ensued.

But the minions of the law were triumphant and the dozen desperadoes were all secured. It is needless to say that Clark and Kane were among them.

The great case was ended.

The Bradys took Kane back to New York with them, where he expiated his crimes in the electric chair.

In due time pretty Daisy Swallow became the happy bride of Sam Newman. But neither ever forgot the debt they owed the Bradys, who were soon busily at work upon another case.

Next week's issue will contain "THE GIRL IN BLACK, OR, THE BRADYS TRAPPING A CONFIDENCE QUEEN."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

Bennie Pate, of Fort Ritner, Ind., is displaying a handsome 30-grain egg-shaped pearl, taken from a mashboard mussel, found in Toe Head bar in White River, near Bono. Vincennes pearl buyers have offered to pay \$700 for it, but their offers have been refused. A number of pearls of less value have been found at the same place during the last few weeks.

Salton Sea continues to dwindle in size and increase in salinity through evaporation. The past (seventh) annual analysis of its water, made by A. E. Vinson, showed that the total solids in the water had increased in a year from 846.55 parts to 1,002.56 parts per 100,000, an increase of 18.4 per cent for the period. The water may now be considered as 1 per cent brine.

A big black bear had no terrors for the eleven-year-old son of A. Friestad, living near Carp, Minn. While building a smudge on his father's homestead for the benefit of the cattle a large black bear came out from the brush and faced him. The little fellow grabbed his axe and swung for Mr. Bruin, but missed. Then he laid down his axe and took a club and pelted the animal, which immediately turned tail and made for the brush. The boy then ran for his home to secure his father's gun, but his mother very wisely refused to let him have it.

Gifts varying from one cent to \$5 have been made into a fund of \$288 by 400 of the prisoners at the State prison at Charlestown, Mass., for the relief of the Salem fire sufferers. The Rev. M. J. Murphy, the chaplain of the institution, took a check for the sum to Gov. Walsh. Gov. Walsh was deeply touched by the generosity of the men in prison. The collection was the first of its kind taken in the history of the State prison. The governor will call on President Wilson to urge him to use his influence to get Congress to appropriate \$200,000 for the relief of the fire sufferers.

Earl Hamilton, left-handed pitcher, of the St. Louis Browns, who recently jumped from the Browns to the Kansas City Federals and back again, holds the record for eating candy. At one sitting he consumed \$14 worth of sweets. It occurred while the ball players were playing poker and were using candy wafers for chips. Hamilton had about forty of the 50-cent variety piled in front of him. In a moment of forgetfulness he tasted a chip and liked it. Then he tasted another. When twenty-eight of them were gone one of the players reminded him that the candy was rather expensive.

As George Wilson, a keeper at the Horne Zoological Arena, east of Independence, Mo., was eating his luncheon in the cooking house the door opened and in walked two big wolves. Wilson summoned help and seized a club.

The wolves were not the little, half-hearted American kind, but the big Siberian variety, noted for their fierceness. They were not as hard to manage as they might have been, however, for they had already dined off some Plymouth Rock roosters and for dessert had eaten a \$10 parrot. They were eventually driven back to their cage by Wilson and several other men.

With a team of oxen hitched to a "prairie schooner" Charles Wasem, who is driving from Regina, Saskatchewan, to Bellville, Ill., arrived in Milwaukee the other morning. Wasem wants to reach Bellville by Sept. 12, when the centennial of his home town will be celebrated. He camped the other night at the farm of F. E. Gruber, seven miles northwest of Milwaukee. "I started on Feb. 24," said Mr. Wasem. "I struck some bad country and bad weather. In March, on the border of Saskatchewan, it was 32 degrees below zero. For a time I was able to make but a few miles a day, but of late I have been making from fifteen to thirty miles."

A terrible heat wave, followed by forest fires, is reported from Russia by the St. Petersburg correspondent of the London Times, whose dispatch says that the heat for three weeks, ranging from 82 to 91 degrees in the shade, has rendered the whole of northern Russia the prey of forest fires, which are now sweeping over hundreds of miles of territory and involving enormous losses to the State and to private owners. Large forest areas in the Province of Pskoff, belonging to the Peasants' Land Bank, are in flames and all the available troops and police in the province have been mobilized and reinforcements have been asked for from the neighboring districts. In the Government of Orsha a peat bog, nearly 100,000 acres in extent, is burning.

All the volcanos along the Alaskan Peninsula west of Seward to the Aleutian Islands are in action, according to a report brought by Capt. McMullen of the steamship Dirigo, which arrived from Dutch Harbor.

Capt. McMullen said Mount Katmai, the great volcano on the mainland across Shelikof Strait from Kodiak Island, was throwing out great volumes of sulphur-laden smoke. The sea, he said, was discolored by sulphur dust and pumice for a distance of 100 miles. Mount Shishaldin and Mount Pavlof, the most active volcanos in the Aleutian Islands, were smoking when the Dirigo passed them.

Capt. McMullen reported that the natives living along the Alaskan Peninsula said the great clouds of volcanic dust hurled into the air recently were caused by volcanic eruptions and not by old deposits of volcanic ash stirred up by a terrific windstorm as previously reported by passing ships.

DRAWER 99

—OR—

A DETECTIVE'S SIX-YEAR SEARCH

By PERCY B. ST. JOHN

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XV (continued)

His hearer shuddered.

"It is hard to believe that you have these papers, Favart," was the sole reply.

"So? But you know I've got zem, don't you?"

"How did they come to be in your possession?"

"Well," replied the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders, "I don't mind telling you, if you will tell me a thing or two in return."

"What do you want to know?"

"Your money? Vere did you get it? Zey say you have millions. You never made it singing—zat I know."

"You are right."

"Den vere did it come from? Ze count had nozzing, and I have heard zat ze old Indian, ze Rajah of—vot you call 'em?—vot you call 'em?—vot you married in Paris left you not a rupee; zat you came near being buried alive."

"It is all true."

"Yet next I hear you have taken Europe by storm—not by your voice alone, but by your wealth, your diamonds, your magnificence. Now, vere you get all zis wealth?"

"It does not concern you."

"But it is true?"

"Partly, and so much the better for you. The papers—give me the papers, and the money I promised is yours."

"Vell," said Favart, slowly, "you tell me nozzing, my lady, but I vill be more kind. I have ze papers. I took zem out of your box you might in Paris. Ze Count Spandini he vas drunk. I took zose from his trunk. I——"

"So you are but a common thief, after all?"

"Call it vat you like—call it vat you like. If I'm a teef you are vorse."

"Favart," said the woman, leaning forward across the table, "let us have an end of this. Already you have bled me severely on the strength of those papers, and Count Spandini, who was in New York not six months ago, informs me that you have bled him, too."

"Vell, vell. Vy not? You are La Tosca? He is now high in ze Italian government. I happen to know zat ze Duke of Montepisani is von vith ze Count Spandini. Vy not, my lady, vy not?"

"Spandini has reformed. He is now all that is good. I——"

"You haf reformed, too, perhaps," sneered the Frenchman.

"I would do so if you would let me," was the bitter reply.

"Vera true; but vith zese papers in existence, vith me in New York you can never do so."

"Never. That is why I am here. Come, Favart, let us bring this to an end. To have my past blotted out of existence I am willing to pay liberally. Give me the papers and I will place the sum you name upon this table, providing I have your promise to leave New York at once and torment me no more."

The ex-manager moved uneasily in his chair.

The fact was his course was by no means clear.

Doubtless the woman had the outrageously large sum of money which he had demanded at that moment in her possession—doubtless she had meant exactly what she said the night before, that to be free from his persecution forever she would give two hundred thousand dollars in hard cash.

But how to get this was the puzzling question.

To return the papers which he had basely stolen was impossible, for they, as the reader knows, had slipped from his grasp by the mysterious robbery of Drawer 99.

A moment more and his mind was made up.

After all it was only a woman with whom he had to deal.

To trick her would be no difficult matter. Come what would he intended to have that money, or La Tosca should never leave the room alive.

"She must give it to me if I kill her for it," he thought. "but bah! I know ze voman. I shall have no trouble—no trouble at all," and his tone changed to one of pitying admiration, as he said aloud:

"Eh bien, madame. As you vish so shall it be. I bear no malice. You have suffered enough already. Give me ze money, and ze papers are yours. Parbleu, I vill go to Australia—I swear I vill trouble you no more."

He arose as he spoke, and walking to a trunk which stood in one corner of the room opened it, and took out a small bundle of letters.

"Here zey are," he continued, balancing them in his hand, "now den ze money, and you and me forever civ quits."

The disguised woman burst into tears.

"Favart, I hope you are not deceiving me," she murmured, brokenly. "Here is the money; take it—only give

me those fatal wicked papers and let me destroy them from my sight forever."

Without the slightest hesitation she produced a large leather pocket-book and spread it open upon the table, taking from it bill after bill, with the mystic figures \$1,000 printed upon each.

Jules Favart received the bills and carefully counted them.

There was no mistake about it. Two hundred thousand dollars was within his grasp.

"The papers!" whispered La Tosca. "The papers: give them to me, Favart, and with the help of God I will now lead a better life."

Jules Favart smiled evilly.

"Ah-ha, my lady! Oh-ho, my lady!" he answered, with a sneer; "live as you please! I've got the cash, and you may have these in return."

He tossed her the package taken from the trunk.

Eagerly La Tosca seized it, with painful anxiety she tore the letters open and examined them, as she did so a fearful change coming over her face.

"So—so!" she hissed. "You have deceived me. Jules Favart, do you know what these letters are?"

"Absolutely, madame. Zey are nozzing but a lot of old business letters. Zey are nozzing to me and less to you."

"What do you mean—to take my money—to rob me—to keep the papers and blind me again?"

"Absolutely, madame," sneered the Frenchman, with a bow of much respect. "You could not read my mind better eef you tried."

A wild, insane light was now visible in the eyes of the woman. Favart, bad and bold as he was, felt a shudder pass through his frame.

He stepped behind her and flung open the door.

"Go!" he whispered. "Go at once!"

"Give—me—the—papers, Jules Favart! Give them to me now! I shall not ask again!"

"Go!" hissed the Frenchman. "I'll give you nozzing! Leave my room or I'll call ze police and denounce you for ze murderess zat you are!"

Fatal threat!

Did Monsieur Favart really understand women so very well after all?

With a sudden spring she was upon him and had clutched his throat, pinning him against the wall.

With one sweep of the hand she buried the long cheese knife, which the wretch had never missed from its place on the table, deep within his breast.

"Murder! Murder! She's murdering me!"

One wild, sickening cry and the ex-manager sank to the floor.

"The papers! The papers!" muttered the woman, wildly. "Where are they? On his person! I must have them. I——"

Suddenly through the open door there burst a low, mocking laugh.

"That's right—that's right!" cried a voice, in thick, drunken accents. "Fight among yourselves, kill each other all you please, but Wobbly Kate has got the papers, and means to keep them, too."

La Tosca staggered back.

A filthy, ragged, bloated creature stood leering in at the door.

"Kate," she whispered, in agonized tones—"Kate! Oh, heavens, this can't be you!"

"Jane!" burst from the lips of the wreck—"Jane!"

She turned and fled down the stairs.

With one shuddering glance behind, the murderess sprang after her, and, gaining the foot of the staircase, rushed out into the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

STILL STRUGGLING IN THE SHADOWS OF THE PAST.

Overhead in Henry Bishop's little room the boys stood expecting a repetition of the cry of murder with bated breaths.

"Hen, there's something wrong down there," whispered Jack, and moving toward the door he opened it, thrusting his head out into the hall.

"Hark!" he added, "there is some one running away. Don't you hear the clumping on the stairs?"

"Sounds like a wooden leg," muttered Henry, seizing his hat. "Come on, Jack, we must see what it all means."

But Jack Smith was before him, and had gained the landing below some seconds in advance.

Oddly enough, no one within the house appeared to have been disturbed but themselves, for when they reached the landing they were alone.

Through the open door of the Frenchman's apartment a lamp could be seen dimly burning, its flickering rays shining upon a fearful sight.

It was the dead body of the man once famous throughout all Europe as the manager of the Paris opera—Jules Favart!

"Great heavens, Jack! there has been murder done here!" burst from the lips of Henry Bishop, as he gazed upon the coarse, bloated features of the Frenchman with distended eyes.

"Not a doubt of it!"

"But——"

"But if we want to catch the murderer we must be quick. Hen, he has only a moment start of us! You heard?"

"You bet I did. We must call help!"

"Call no one! We can overhaul him if we are quick!" cried Jack, springing for the stairs.

No, it was unnecessary to call any one, for the boys had no more than left the house before a man roughly dressed, turning the corner, ascended the steps, and, passing through the door, made straight for the Frenchman's room.

It was J. Nix, just one moment too late to encounter the boy for whom he had searched New York most persistently during the past seven months.

Meanwhile, Jack and Henry, never guessing what a narrow escape they had had, after a hasty glance up and down the avenue, had started at full speed in the direction of Washington Square.

(To be continued)

FACTS WORTH READING

A world's altitude record for an aeroplane carrying only the aviator was made the other day by the German airman, Otto Linnekogel, who at the aerodrome attained a height of 6,600 meters, or approximately 21,654 feet, in a monoplane.

The existing record was held by Legagneux, who last Dec. 28 flew to a height of 6,120 meters.

Georges Legagneux, the French airman, who was killed by a fall recently, on Dec. 28, 1913, ascended to a height of 20,295 feet at St. Raphael, France. This mark beat the previous record of 19,300 feet, held by Edmond Per-ryon.

On June 28 the duration record was broken by Landmann, a German aviator, who stayed in the air for twenty-one hours and forty-nine minutes.

Miss Dorothy Edna Bauer, 14 years old, daughter of Henry J. Bauer, who has a country home on Buena Vista Drive, swam across the Hudson at Hastings-on-Hudson in an hour and thirty minutes. The river is a mile across, but the strong tide compelled the swimmer to cover four miles. She was the first woman to swim the river here.

For several weeks Miss Bauer and her friends had planned the trial. A large crowd of friends had gathered at the float of the Tower Ridge Yacht Club when Miss Bauer plunged into the water. Ample precautions were taken for her safety. Otis Peabody Swift rowed ahead, and many launches and motor boats trailed the swimmer and flanked her.

Miss Bauer, who is studying art, has made many sketches of Hudson views. With Dorothy Hall and Elizabeth Keys, she has explored the Palisades from Alpine, opposite Yonkers, to Hook Mountain.

The total bill for food and drink for passengers carried by the North German Lloyd Steamship Company last year, according to Oelrichs & Co., the agents, was \$1,394,000 more than for the fiscal year of 1913. A year ago the books showed that in the preceding twelve months \$5,125,000 had been expended for food and drink, but for the year ending with June 30, 1914, \$6,519,000 was expended for this purpose.

The appetites of the passengers were not as voracious as those of the ships themselves. Into their fiery maws below stokers shoveled 1,791,013 tons of coal, worth \$7,768,868. During the preceding year the ships consumed 1,743,016 tons of coal, valued at \$7,581,370.

For those two items alone, coal and provisions, the North German Lloyd spent during the year \$14,287,868, a large part of which fell into the cash registers of Uncle Sam, while a large part of the balance went to the Germans. All coal for eastbound steamers is purchased in this country. The same is true of provisions.

Passengers and crew consumed 8,318,867 pounds of

fresh meat, 1,044,636 pounds of fish, 555,771 pounds of poultry, 8,157,100 pounds of flour, 20,944,630 pounds of potatoes, 7,801,604 eggs, 2,925,287 oranges and 1,000,000 apples and pears.

The voyagers drank 36,661 bottles of champagne, 168,516 bottles of other wines, 291,998 bottles of beer and 2,214,641 quarts of beer in kegs, in addition to 428,914 bottles of mineral water.

The animals and plants of the world are divided into regions almost as clearly marked as the political boundaries of empires. The Australian region is perhaps the most clearly marked and the most peculiar of them all. Its indigenous inhabitants, both animals and plants, belong to a bygone epoch of the world. Besides the island-continent of Australia itself, with Tasmania, the Australian life-region includes New Guinea, the largest of all islands, 300,000 square miles in area, and the large islands stretching from New Guinea toward Java and Borneo, but not including these two. At a remote epoch this whole region was continuous land. At a period still more remote, in the secondary age of geology, only one part of the whole area was above the sea, that part of Australia which is on the side farthest from New Zealand; and this huge southwestern island had already received the ancestors of its ancient plants and animals, probably from southern Asia.

At the period when this southwestern island was first populated by mammalian animals, one of the most important matters in animal life, namely, the production of the young, was still at a very early stage. Among many of the animals the old fashion of laying eggs, inherited from reptile ancestors, still remained, even though the young were fed with milk after they were hatched. In Australia there are still some of these primitive mammals which lay eggs; the duck-billed platypus, or ornithorhynchus, and the echidna, or porcupine ant-eater, which is almost equally primitive. But the great majority of the Australian mammals had already, even at the remote period we are considering, got one stage beyond the egg-laying epoch. They produced their young alive, though still hardly beyond the foetal stage, small, blind, naked, unformed creatures which had to be tucked into a skin pouch on the abdomen of the mother, and kept there, within convenient reach of the milk supply, till they got their proper growth and were able to lookout for themselves. These pouched or marsupial animals are characteristic of Australia, though there are a few stragglers, like the opossum, in the New World. Most conspicuous among the Australian marsupials, or pouch-bearers, are the kangaroos, of which there are nine species of large size, and forty smaller species, as well as a curious tree-climbing kangaroo, in New Guinea. The largest, the great red kangaroo, stands five feet high and weighs as much as a man.

VENTRILOQUIST VAL

—OR—

THE MYSTERY OF THE DARK ROOM

By TOM FOX

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (continued)

Val could have choked the old rooster, for now he saw that he was at the bottom of it all—to catch a rich husband for his daughter, whether she approved of his selection or not.

But he knew that she was afraid of him, as were all of his family, including his wife, and that there was no help for it so long as he had made up his mind about the matter and Mr. Sturges was in earnest, as he most certainly appeared to be. In fact, too much so to suit Val, he being evidently deeply smitten with Maude's beauty, vivacity, and accomplishments.

She was not down to breakfast the next morning, neither was Mr. Dubsey, but Val was in no humor to delay or prolong his meal, although Mrs. Dubsey was as pleasant as ever, and the other two girls quite as agreeable, having come to look upon him as a brother almost.

But hurrying through, he started for Sixth avenue to take a car down-town to business, with thoughts which it must be admitted were just a trifle wicked.

Near the corner he met Maude, who seemed to be just returning from her morning walk.

Val raised his hat, and would have passed her without any further demonstration, but she was purposely there to speak with him, knowing that he went to the office an hour or two before her father, as a rule.

She was looking flushed and excited.

"Val, I want to speak with you," she said.

"With me?" he asked, as though it could not be possible that she could think of anybody but Sturges.

"Yes, what do you think, Val?"

"About what?"

"Why, pa says I must marry Mr. Sturges if he asks me to do so."

"Well, would that not please you?" he asked, and there was cold bitterness in his tone.

"Why, Val——" she started to say in protest, but Val's cold look and the bitterness of his voice cut her to the heart, and tears sprung to her eyes in the place of words to her lips.

"Why, Maude, I thought you were delighted with the attention he was showing you."

"Well, it was all well enough so long as he took me to ride and to places of amusement. So long as it was only a flirtation I did not care. Other girls have gentleman friends who do the same thing, and there is no harm in it, but I never expected that it would come to this. Oh, papa is very mean," she said, drying her eyes.

"He is, indeed, if he is forcing this thing on you," replied Val, with downcast eyes.

He was sorry now that he had spoken so bitterly.

"Why, I never thought of such a thing. So long as I could regard him as pleasant company, he was all well enough, but now I am sure that I shall positively detest the man. The idea of taking me out of school and marrying me to a man as old as papa is himself, just because he is rich!"

"Yes, but some girls would be delighted."

"But I am not. What do I care for money? When I am of age I shall have five thousand dollars, which grandma left me, and that is all I want."

But she didn't know what her father had done with the little legacies left to his children. Wall street had claimed them long ago.

"I—I am very sorry for you, Maude," and he looked at an approaching car.

"I'll ride down-town with you, Val, for I want to talk with you. I must talk to somebody or I shall die. Of course, I can't talk with the girls, for they are too young, nor with mamma, because she is wholly under papa's control, and would not dare to tell me even what she might think; so who have I got but you, Val?" she asked, looking up into his handsome but sad face as they stood on the corner, ready for the car.

Val assisted her into it, and took a seat by her side, happy even in his sorrow, although now she appeared to treat him more like a brother than anything else. Yet in her sorrow he could not find it in his heart not to pity and love her still.

"Now, Val, what am I to do?" she asked, after the car had started.

"I am sure I cannot tell you, Maude," he replied, with downcast eyes.

"What! You do not know—you cannot say? Then I will run away, or kill myself," said she, looking him earnestly in the face.

He was startled, for he had never seen her in such a mood, or known that she had so much spirit, before.

"Oh, no! don't do that, Maude," said he.

"What! would you have me marry him, Val?" she asked, her large blue eyes flashing into his.

It broke him all up. He hardly knew what to say.

"No, Maude, I—I'd rather die than see you marry anybody you did not love."

"And I would rather die twice over."

The flirting, giddy girl had suddenly become a thoughtful, resolute woman.

Val was silent, but his heart was beating a lively pulse in his bosom.

"Well, Val, please tell me what I am to do."

"I know your father pretty well. I know he has set his heart on selling you to William Sturges, who is evidently in love with you."

"But what do I care for that? I am not in love with him, the old goose," she protested.

"I am glad you are not."

"But what am I to do? Tell me that."

"Well, it would be very foolish, if not very dangerous, to run away."

"But think of it, Val," she said, earnestly.

"I do," he mused.

"Well, if I remain at home pa will force me to marry him, and that would kill me. I know it would, which would be worse than running away, would it not?"

"It certainly would, Maude."

"Then I will tell him at once that I do not and cannot love him."

"Ah! then he would persuade you that you would learn to love him," said Val, thinking how much the situation was like a certain play he had seen.

"That I will not admit—never."

An idea struck Val. It would have struck him sooner, had he not been thinking of other things which might lead up to the very person in question.

"Oh, Charley Valentine, you do not care. I know it," she finally said, noticing his looks of abstraction.

He started and looked into her reproving face.

"Yes, I am certain of it," she added.

"Maude, I care a great deal more than you know for," said he, sadly.

"Then tell me what to do," said she, impatiently, and still as a sister might have importuned a brother.

"Maude, will you follow my instructions?"

"Yes, I'll do anything you say," she said, eagerly.

"Well, we want to gain time, at least I do, and I think it will be all the better for you. He has not asked you to marry him yet, has he?"

"Not directly, but indirectly he did last night, and I replied by singing: 'I'm o'er young to marry yet,' for which papa gave me an awful scolding after he had gone. But I am sure he will propose the very next time he comes."

"Very likely. Well, you must do some acting. Fight shy. Appeal to his generosity without giving him the cut direct. Tell him that you are young, and never loved anybody yet."

She gave an involuntary start and placed her hand on his arm, blushed slightly, but quickly recovered herself.

"Well?" this quite calmly.

"Tell him you never had an idea of getting married; that you are not sure whether you could love him or not; appeal to his generosity for time to see if you can learn to love him, as it would be a terrible thing for both if you should marry without loving him, and in that way keep off anything like an engagement."

"Yes, but he may become impatient," said she.

"Well, and you may learn to love him meantime."

"Charley Valentine, you are positively mean."

"But such things have been known," said he, and, in fact, it was a fear in his heart that rankled like an arrow that by some possible chance he might make her love him. He had read of such things.

"Oh, that can never be!" she replied, quickly.

"I—I hope not, Maude. Well, at all events, it will give you time before deciding, and may positively choke him off, if nothing else happens to do so."

"But papa?"

"Well, you can assure him that Sturges has not yet proposed, and you can persuade Sturges yourself to say nothing to your father about it just at present. Oh, I know you can work it in your own bewitching way, for he evidently is very sweet on you."

"Well, I will do as you say, Val; hereafter it will be a distasteful task. I never could have been so pleasant with him if I had suspected what his and papa's intentions were. But I will do as you say," she added, thoughtfully.

"I think it will be best. But here we are down-town," he added, as the car reached the Vesey street terminus at Broadway.

He got out and started for the office, while she retained her seat and rode back in the same car, sad and thoughtful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A STRANGE AND CONFUSING STORY.

According to appointment, Val met Madam Kuzunski and Mrs. Sturges that same night.

But Mrs. Sturges was greatly changed, having grown in a few hours to look ten years older.

She and Madam Kuzunski had been having a long talk as to the advisability of telling young Valentine the story of her life.

What good could it do, further than to still dissuade him from adopting the life of a circus performer?

But Madam Kuzunski would have it that Val was a very clever detective, and ever since Mary Sturges had recovered her reason and memory, and had told her all she knew of the child she had intrusted to a cousin, years ago, and which she had never since been able to gain any trace of, she believed that the child lived, and that Val might be able to trace him out.

This Mary Sturges could not believe, for years before she had tried to do it, but in vain. The cousin she had given her baby-boy to had died, and so had his otherwise childless wife, and there remained no trace of her boy, whether living or dead.

And so her heart had sunk within her; she had returned once more to the circus-ring, after a long spell of sickness, but not the beautiful, dashing rider of a few years before.

But up to this point the reader has an outline sketch of her life.

(To be continued)

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From Ehrenberg, Ariz., has come a tale of three mysterious Spanish strangers, who came by automobile from California, for a few days' dug around in the ruins of the deserted camp of La Paz and who left with \$60,000 found under a floor of a saloon of the olden days conducted by a Portuguese, Francisco Rabana. Of the digging there seems no doubt, however much attaches to the rumor of treasure found. There have been many such explorations in the past of the ruins of the old camp, where millions of dollars' worth of gold dust were handled about sixty years ago. Even some of the tombs have been desecrated by the searchers for hidden gold.

Many American tourists had an unpleasant experience the other day when the bursting of a subterranean lake flooded the Simplon tunnel and interrupted the international train service through the Alps. A train was derailed in the center of the tunnel, where the water rose to a depth of forty inches and carried away one hundred yards of the track. Under the guidance of the train guards the passengers, a large proportion of whom were Americans, walked several miles through the water and darkness to Iselle. All the Brigue and Domodossola express trains were stopped. The wealthier travelers ordered automobiles by telegraph or telephone and were able to proceed to points where the service had not become disorganized by the flooding.

According to the Geographical Journal, there is now wireless telegraphic service from the South Orkneys, through the South Shetlands, to the Falkland Islands, and thence to the rest of the world. The South Orkneys, on the verge of the Antarctic, are the site of what has hitherto been the most isolated meteorological station in the world, an important outpost of the Argentine meteorological service. The linking of this station with the world by wireless will be as notable an event as was the recent inauguration of daily wireless weather reports from Spitzbergen, in the Arctic.

The freak of the lightning in melting the gold chain and locket around the neck of Miss Margaret Fife without killing her is regarded at Canton, O., by physicians and electricians as a phenomenon beyond explanation. Miss Fife was stricken by the lightning bolt, and for a while it was feared she could not be revived. Herman Grabowsky, who, with Theodore Renner, was fishing in an open boat on Congress Lake when the lightning struck the Fife house, ran to Miss Fife's assistance. Other cottagers at the lake were summoned and artificial respiration was used on the unconscious girl. Dr. C. B. Williams of Hartsville, north of here, was finally sent to the lake, and two hours after she had been stricken Miss Fife was restored to consciousness. She was brought to a hospital in Canton and her burns dressed. Physicians said they expected she would survive.

"Secret Service"

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Mrs. George Atkinson, of Brazil, Ind., regarded a heating stove a safe place to hide money as long as the weather continued about one hundred degrees in the shade, but when the mercury suddenly fell forty degrees recently some one lighted a fire in the stove. Two hours afterward Mrs. Atkinson thought of the \$65 she had placed in the stove. Nine silver dollars were recovered.

Martha Evelyn Terry, daughter of E. W. Terry, of Pattonville, principal of the Creve Coeur School, in St. Louis County, Mo., though only two and one-half years old, knows the alphabet, is able to count up to ten, and spell a number of short words distinctly. Though English is her mother tongue she is rapidly learning German from her mother. She needs only to be told the name of an object once to remember it, say her parents.

Thomas Summers, a hotel proprietor of Maplewood, N. J., put \$110 between two mattresses on his bed the other night. When he awoke the next day his money bag was gone. In the lower mattress was a large hole and a pair of scissors lay on the floor. A man who was in the Summers place is believed to have climbed a porch and seen Summers hide the money. Patrick Riley's saloon, across the street, also was entered. The thief squeezed through a small transom over the front door.

Garbed in overalls and a hickory shirt, George Trubnikoff, aged twenty-one years, the son of a Russian nobleman, and heir to a large estate on the river Volga, is working on the farm of Thornton Babcock near Watertown, S. Dak., for the purpose of getting first hand information about practical farming in America. The methods he learns here he expects to put into operation on the 11,000-acre family farm in the Czar's dominion. The youthful Russian will pay particular attention to the use of modern American machinery on the farm with a view to introducing it in Russia. He came to South Dakota through an acquaintance formed with Prof. N. E. Hansen of the State College of Agriculture, who made two trips to Russia to secure Siberian alfalfa seed.

For more than two months Miss Lenore Mistrot, a young stenographer, friendless, out of work and almost penniless, found nightly lodgings in recesses in St. Mary's Cathedral, San Francisco, according to a statement she made to the police. Recently the young woman was found by the sexton acting strangely in the cathedral and was arrested. Since she was arrested she has refused to eat until released. She then talked of her hardships and told the police she had attended each vesper service since Easter, had lingered until the cathedral was empty and had then found sleeping places in unfrequented parts of the edifice. When the doors were opened for early morning mass she slipped away. Two and a half years ago Miss Mistrot came here from Dallas, Tex., she said, and had lived comfortably until an injury to her eyesight had thrown her out of work.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Bridget, does your mistress assist you in cooking?" "Yis, very much." "How does she do it?" "By kaping out of the kitchen."

Colored Minister—I am requested to as' de brudder dat passes de plate to sabe de buttons in ter-day's kollection foh de Ladies' Sewin' Circle ob dis church.

Sunset Simms (drowsily)—Dey say de Prince uv Wales never wears a suit of clothes more than once. Weary Willie—Well, needer do we, only it's a longer once.

Teacher—I want each one of you to make a sentence, using the word "delight" in it. Small Boy (colored)—De wind come in de window an' blow out de light.

"Mother," said Miss Dollie Cumrox, "can't father afford a seat in the Senate?" "A seat!" echoed the good lady, scornfully. "I'd have you to understand that he is rich enough to have a whole sofa, if he desires it."

Little Tompkins—That fellow Brown tried to stuff me up with some of his traveler's tales the other day. Talked about his trip to Italy and the waving fields of macaroni, but he didn't catch me, you know. 'They don't wave.

She—Don't you think Mrs. Wapsley is a beautiful woman? He—She is a beautiful woman—the most beautiful woman, I think, that I have ever seen. She (after he has gone)—I wonder if he has always been such a fool, or whether it has just begun to grow on him lately.

Norah had been told to say at the front door that her mistress was not at home when certain callers appeared upon the scene. It evidently went much against the grain for her to make herself responsible for even so small a white lie, but she promised to do so, and with certain modifications, she kept her word. "Is Mrs. Blank at home?" queried the caller. "For this wan toime, Mrs. Smithers, she ain't!" said the maid; "but bivin' help her if yez ask me again! I'll not let twice for anybody livin', upon me sowl!"

THE GOLDEN CROSS MYSTERY.

By D. W. Stevens.

Many years ago there lived near Manchester, England, a wealthy old gentleman named Julian Vernon. With him resided William Vernon, his brother's son, who was associated with him in business.

The old man, though now on the verge of three-score and ten years, was yet in the habit, as he had been for nearly half a century, of riding into Manchester alone, once a year, to collect his rents. This business usually took two or three days for its transaction.

Being of a miserly disposition, he preferred to do the errand himself rather than pay an agent, however trifling the charge might be.

Will Vernon constantly upbraided the old man with the folly of the thing, telling him that it was not safe to go on such journeys alone, that he would certainly be robbed, and perhaps murdered; but it was of no use to remonstrate. Mr. Vernon could find no reason that was of sufficient importance to prevent him from pursuing the course which he had marked out for himself, and which he meant to follow as long as he could.

"I can do just as well as an agent," he said. "I've attended to this business for many years, and have not been molested yet."

Such were his parting words on the occasion of his last visit to Manchester. On this day his nephew felt more than usually anxious, and after fretting away two days of his uncle's absence, determined to take the road in the direction of town and meet him on his return. The old man always made his headquarters at the "Golden Cross"; he would transact his business in the daytime, and return at night to the inn. The fourth day he usually started to return home, and his nephew knew that on the evening of the third, if nothing should happen, he would meet him there.

The young man had prepared every detail requisite for the journey, when by a fortunate combination of circumstances I found myself in the outskirts of Manchester, where I had been sent by my superiors to look up a little affair that had caused a considerable amount of annoyance to the aristocracy in that neighborhood, and on the day in question, as I was driving by the home of the Vernons, I was hailed by Will, whose father I had served in a matter when Will was quite young and whom, consequently, I knew quite well.

He explained to me the condition of affairs, and confided to me his fears as to his uncle's safety. Deeming it prudent to lose no time, lest I should arrive on the scene too late, if Will's fears were all well founded, I determined to move in the matter immediately. I accordingly started, and arrived at the inn safely just as night was coming on. On entering I observed two rough-looking men seated at a side table partaking of bread and cheese and a pot of beer.

My first thought was to make inquiries of the innkeeper respecting Will's uncle, then to see that my horse was properly cared for, as I had ridden rapidly.

"He left the inn early this morning," said the landlord, who knew me, "saying that he had much business to trans-

act during the day, but should be back shortly after sunset. He will be here soon, I think. But he is much too old to ride around the country in this fashion. It is not safe."

"I know that, but it's of no use to reason with him," I answered. "He persists in having his own way, and will continue the practice as long as he is able to get about. I felt uneasy about him—that is why I am here to-night."

"Well, he is very foolish; that is all I can say," said the landlord, with an ominous shake of the head. "I suppose he will return through Ashdene road; that's as safe as any in these parts, I think."

The two men arose at this point of the conversation, and, after settling their score, quietly withdrew from the inn.

"Do you know those fellows?" I asked my host, when they had gone.

"No; they are strangers hereabouts," Boniface returned. I said no more, but carelessly paced the room.

In silence I continued my walk. An hour might possibly have elapsed since the men had taken their departure, and the silvery moon had just sent her first ray of light into the darkness, when there suddenly came from without the sound of a horse's hoofs.

"That must be the old gentleman," exclaimed Wilson, opening the door and gazing out into the darkness. "But I never knew him to ride so before. He must be alarmed at something. Why, he is coming at a fearful pace."

The clatter of hoofs now grew louder and more distinct. I waited anxiously. Nearer and nearer still it came. In a moment the horse was visible; it approached. It was riderless!

Mr. Vernon had been murdered and robbed!

Great was the sensation caused by the mysterious murder of the old gentleman. He had disappeared from the face of the earth so suddenly that not the slightest clew was left to point to the manner of his taking off. The two men that I had seen in the Golden Cross had vanished and left no trace behind. A murder might even have been questioned had it not been for the copious amount of blood found on the saddle of Mr. Vernon's horse, together with the fact that he had in his possession a large sum of money.

* * * * *

Ten years passed, and the tragedy was well-nigh forgotten. During that lapse of time, however, I had made it a point to stop at the "Golden Cross" whenever I should find myself in that part of the country, and many a time was the topic of the Vernon murder discussed and speculated upon by the good host and myself far into the night.

On the occasion of which I am about to write, I had just arrived at the inn on a usual visit. The landlord was standing at his door when I drove up, and he gave me a cordial greeting.

"I've been thinking about you all day, Mr. —," he said. "It is just ten years ago to-night since poor old Mr. Vernon was murdered."

"Yes," I replied, "I remember it well; and, hark ye, Wilson, I shall never rest satisfied till his murderers are brought to punishment."

"Well, sir, they say murder will out, but I don't know

whether that means that the doors of it won't escape—like these fellows seem to have done."

As we talked in this strain, we observed a middle-aged man approaching from an opposite direction. He was dressed shabbily, and looked pale and ill; there was a restless look about his eyes which could be noticed at a glance by the most casual observer. He accosted the innkeeper, and desired to know if he could be accommodated with a room, as he intended to remain in the neighborhood a few days.

"Certainly, sir," said mine host. "Here, Boots, show this party to a room."

With a nod the man shuffled away. I had been regarding him intently and felt sure that I had seen his face before, but where, I could not at first remember. Suddenly came light, and my whole frame trembled.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Wilson. "Are you ill?"

"Oh, no," I answered. "But I have an odd request to make. Can you arrange it so that I can have the room next to this stranger?"

"It is rather a strange fancy," replied the landlord, curiously, "but I think I can accommodate you."

The stranger did not put in an appearance again below stairs, but ordered supper to be served in his own room. I felt disappointed, for I had intended to watch this man closely, although I did not wish to awaken his suspicions.

I felt uneasy, and when at an early hour I went to my chamber, it was with no inclination to sleep. I lay on the outside of the bed, and listened intently for the faintest sound in the adjoining apartment, but everything was silent in that direction. There were sounds of life below for an hour or so longer, then all was still in the house.

It was getting on toward midnight when I heard a movement in the stranger's room.

I arose softly, and listened with suspended breath. In a moment I heard a latch lifted, and then a door was cautiously opened; a man crept along the passage, stealthily descended the stairs, opened the outside door and passed out. This was all done so quietly that no one but a listener would have detected it.

The instant the door was closed I sprang to a window which overlooked the yard. It was a clear, moonlit night, and everything about the premises was plainly discernible from where I stood.

In a moment the man had passed by the corner of the house and was fully revealed by the light from the moon; he looked anxiously toward the house, as if to satisfy himself that no one was astir, then walked to one of the out-buildings, soon reappearing with a spade over his shoulder, and walked in the direction of the Ashdene road.

I had watched his movements narrowly; now the time for action had arrived.

I crept downstairs, carrying my boots, which I speedily drew on in the open air. I then started off in pursuit of the stranger, keeping as much in the shadow as possible.

Occasionally the man paused and looked around him, as though he suspected some one was dogging his steps; then, as if reassured, he moved stealthily on again.

In this way we walked for over a mile. Suddenly the man turned to the left, and, walking a little distance, paused beside a clump of bushes.

I was not twenty rods behind him. I sat down in the shelter of a ledge, where I could safely watch my man's movements. First he examined the ground carefully, and peered down as if in search of some coveted prize.

The next moment he had driven the spade in the ground; he threw up a few shovelfuls of earth, his attitude one of extreme nervousness, after which he stooped, picked up something, and held it toward the moonlight.

It was a small box, and I knew by the dull, clinking sound that it contained money. Feeling satisfied upon that point, I hurried back to the inn, where I arrived fifteen minutes before the stranger.

I watched the fellow on his return, saw him replace the spade in the shed, heard him ascend the stairs, and enter his room. Soon all was silent. I listened awhile longer, then, feeling satisfied that the man was asleep, groped my way to the landlord's room, and requested him to get up immediately.

In a few moments Wilson appeared, rubbing his eyes, and wondering what his guest could possibly want.

"Hush!" cried I, as he was about to speak. "Be cautious! As I stand before you a living man, I have found old Mr. Vernon's murderer to-night."

"Who—who is it?" he at last managed to stammer out.

"Why, the stranger," replied I.

Ten minutes after I was on the road. My first care was to procure a warrant for the stranger's arrest, and then, in company with two of the police, I started back to the Golden Cross inn.

It was daylight when we drove into the yard, and the stranger was just coming down the steps. His face crimsoned upon perceiving us, then grew deadly pale.

On a signal from me he was taken at once into custody, and conveyed to prison, where he underwent an examination before the magistrate, who committed him for trial at the next assizes. During the time between the examination and trial, Martin Blake, for such was the stranger's name, continued indifferent to all persuasions to confess his crime.

The testimony of the innkeeper and postboy tended in no way to cause him alarm, but when I was called and stated, as is customary with members of our profession, in a calm, clear voice, that I had recognized the prisoner on the night of his arrival at the "Golden Cross" as one of the men I had seen at the inn on the very night Julian Vernon was murdered, he began to show some signs of alarm, and when I stated further that I had watched his movements and afterward followed him to the place where the box was concealed, Blake's guilt and terror became so manifest as to convince people of his guilt; they could have no doubt now of his participation in the crime.

Suffice it to say that the jury, after a brief deliberation, returned a verdict of guilty, and Blake was sentenced to be hanged on the very spot where he had buried a small portion of the stolen money, the attempted recovery of which had caused his arrest and conviction.

When the murderer found that there was no longer any hope for him, he made a full confession, but refused to betray his companion in crime, who, he claimed, had long ago repented and turned over a new leaf.

GOOD READING

Major Montes, a royal aide, died suddenly at King Alfonso's luncheon table aboard the royal yacht Giralda. Major Montes was an old friend of the King, who was deeply affected by his death, and immediately canceled all his engagements for the regatta.

The bulls carried off the honors in the bullfighting in Madrid, July 12. In the event for amateurs the sword of one of the toreadors was caught by the bull and tossed into the stand. It struck a spectator in the neck, killing him. Later a Mexican swordsman, Miguel Frey, after killing the first bull was mortally gored by the second. The fighting was then stopped for the day.

Miss Elsie Francisco, nineteen years old, assistant ticket agent at the Bryn Mawr station, on the main line of the Putnam railroad, in Yonkers, N. Y., rushed into the blazing structure and, risking her life, saved the rack of tickets from the flames. The depot was fired by vandals, it is believed. After saving the tickets Miss Francisco, her mother, who is the agent, and her brother fought the flames until the fire apparatus arrived.

Arthur Schmidt, 50 years old, was brought from Winfield, Kan., and placed behind the walls of the State penitentiary, which his father, Charles Schmidt, built in 1864. Schmidt is to serve four years on a charge of violation of the State prohibitory law. When he arrived Schmidt said his father had superintended the erection of the walls which were to deprive him of his liberty. He said he frequently had heard his father speak of the walls as the best masonry in the country.

After a confession that he had held up and robbed a lumber company's pay car at Stevens, Miss., on June 27, killing Paymaster Reese Fitzgerald and wounding two others, Mose Johnson, a negro, led officers to a sink hole half a mile from the scene of the holdup, where the larger part of the \$2,300 stolen was concealed. He also directed the officers to a hollow log, where was found the gun with which he shot the men. Johnson, who says he committed the crime single-handed, is in jail here under heavy guard.

The windiest region of the world of which we have any knowledge appears to be the coast of Wilkes Land, where Dr. Mawson's expedition recently spent two years. In his presidential address before the Royal Society of New South Wales, Mr. R. H. Cambage recently stated that Mawson's records at Adelie Land for 1912 showed an average wind velocity throughout the year of about 48 miles an hour, while velocities of 100 miles an hour were common. This surpasses even the records made on high mountains in other parts of the world; e. g., on Mount Washington, N. H., where the former meteorological station showed an average velocity of only 41 miles an hour during the winter, and much lower velocities in summer.

John Sheehan, a blacksmith, of Webster avenue and 204th street, New York, climbed a telegraph pole the other afternoon, using a pair of rubber boots as gloves, and rescued Orzano Giustino, thirteen years old, from death. The boy had gone up the pole to look for birds' nests and got his hand on a wire. To save himself from falling he clutched at one of the cross arms and seized another wire, switching 3,200 volts through his body. Other boys heard Giustino's scream and ran to his father's shop, at 409 East 204th street. The latter took a pair of rubber boots and started to the rescue. Sheehan, who had also heard the cries, snatched the boots from Giustino, put them on his arms and shinned up the pole, rescuing the boy. An ambulance surgeon from Fordham Hospital revived young Giustino and took him home. He was burned on the hands and chin, and was weak from the shock, but will recover.

A pale-red cow, three years old in the fall of 1912, and long since converted into juicy sirloins by one of the big packing houses, is the basis of an expensive lawsuit which is being tried in the Circuit Court at Greenfield, Mo. The cow herself was worth about \$35 at the time the suit started. J. P. Rader, of Shannon County, who says he lost her from his herd, puts her value at \$50, for which sum he asks judgment against U. M. Randolph, also a Shannon County stockman. Randolph sold the cow to S. H. Wilson, of Everton, this county. The case has been twice tried in Justice's Court and more than \$1,000 costs has accumulated already. Each side has several lawyers. Fifty witnesses made the trip of more than 150 miles from Shannon County to testify at this hearing. Both Rader and Randolph are wealthy. There appears to be little chance of a final settlement of the case short of the upper courts.

"He is perfectly tame, won't hurt anybody, but don't try to play with him unless you know how," said F. H. Perry, of Sioux Falls, S. Dak., as he held a three-foot rattlesnake in his bare hand and watched his slow movements along his arm. He had captured the snake on a rock near the penitentiary as it lay there in the sun. The snake has five rattles. When annoyed it suddenly curled and struck a yardstick near it, imbedding its fangs in the soft wood, which was immediately discolored by the injection of the poison from the fangs. A number of rattlesnakes had been found near the old rock pile, and it was after hearing of these discoveries that Mr. Perry started out to find a snake. He had not hunted long when he came upon one lying on the stone. Perry picked it up by first taking hold of the back of the neck of the reptile, preventing it from striking him, and then put it in a box. In exhibiting it he let it move about while he held it and the spectators shuddered at the thought of what would happen if the snake should suddenly raise itself and strike. No one offered to assist Perry in handling his not.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

THE GREECE-TURKEY QUESTION.

The new crisis that has arisen in the relations of Greece and Turkey turns attention to Turkey's efforts to create a naval force that will end Greece's predominance on the seas.

An elaborate programme of new construction has been decided upon and most of the more important contracts have already been placed. The bulk of the work is to be done in England, but eight torpedo boat destroyers and three submarines will be built in France. Messrs. Vickers and Sir W. G. Armstrong-Whitworth & Co., who have undertaken the reorganization of the Turkish fleet, have received orders for two dreadnoughts as well as several cruisers and destroyers. Moreover, the former firm is completing the battleship Reshadieh, with a displacement of 23,000 tons and ten 13.5 inch guns, for the Ottoman government, while the latter is finishing the Sultan Osman I., which was bought from Brazil and has a displacement of 27,500 tons and a main armament of fourteen 12 inch guns. A big floating dock is also being built for Turkey, and the dockyard at Constantinople is to be modernized.

As regards the plans of Greece two United States battleships will be bought. The Greek admiralty is negotiating also for the purchase of the two Argentine dreadnoughts, Rivadavia and Moreno, which are nearing completion in American yards.

INDIAN PARDONED.

President Wilson commuted the life sentence of Spo-Pee, a Blackfoot Indian confined at the Government Hospital for the Insane in Washington. Spo-Pee was released after having spent the last thirty-two years at the insane asylum.

Spo-Pee killed a white camper in Montana just after the Custer massacre, in 1879. His testimony was that he killed in self-defense, but he was sentenced to be hanged. In 1881 President Garfield commuted the sentence to life imprisonment and the Indian was removed to the Detroit Home of Correction.

Because of Spo-Pee's silence he was declared insane, and in 1882 he was brought to Washington.

Some time ago a band of Blackfoot Indians took the case before Secretary of the Interior Lane and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Sells. These officials convinced the attorney-general's office that Spo-Pee's detention was contrary to law.

Spo-Pee will be taken to the home of his daughter, Mrs. Takes Guns, at Browning, Mont., by Robert J. Hamilton, a delegate of the Blackfoot tribe. The Indian has not seen his daughter since she was a baby. He believes his wife is still living.

Spo-Pee enjoyed his first automobile trip the other afternoon when he was brought from the asylum to Washington. He will be granted an allotment of land and a part of the tribal fund after he returns to Montana.

FRUIT BY PANAMA CANAL.

Fresh fruits at reasonable prices every month in the year—this is one of the benefits which everybody in the United States will gain through the opening of the Panama Canal.

South America has a range of climate and variety of conditions that admit of the successful cultivation of every known fruit. Those already grown there include, besides all those native to this country, the mango, breadfruit, banana, tamarind, sapodilla, avocado, pomegranate, olive, fig, loquat, orange lemon, mamme apple and many others.

The canal will bring this vast and varied supply of fruits within easy reach of our tables. Refrigerator steamers will bring them from the West Coast of South America to New Orleans by way of the canal in a week's time. Only two or three days more will be required for fast fruit trains to distribute the cargoes to New York, Chicago and other market centers.

Best of all, these fruits from South America will be available just at the time of year when most of our own fruits are out of season, for the months which are winter here are summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador are as well suited to the cultivation of delicious fruits as any part of the earth. In these countries apricots ripen from December to February, cherries from November to February, peaches from December to March, plums from February to May and grapes from January to June.

Last year the United States imported more than \$32,000,000 worth of fruits. As soon as the canal is in active operation it seems likely that all this supply and a great deal more will be drawn from South America. Then even the poorest of us will be able to enjoy peaches and other fresh ripe fruit all winter long.

Undoubtedly we shall import from Argentina a large quantity of grapes, the fruit which attains the greatest commercial importance there. Argentina has 259,000 acres of vineyards and the yield is so enormous that some of them show a net profit of \$840 to \$1,000 an acre. In 1910 the country produced over 92,000,000 gallons of wine, more than twice the amount produced in California in the same year.

Chile is another California, but with a climate possibly even more mild. There are, in fact, many similarities, and all of the fruits grown in California are produced in Chile, probably in equal perfection, but with far less care. The industry has not developed as in North America.

Here, too, the grape is the most important fruit, the annual production being about 42,000,000 gallons of excellent wine.

The section about Valdivia is also noted for its fine apples, those from one well known grower having frequently sold in Buenos Ayres for \$10.50 a box of 140 apples, while individual fine specimens have retailed even in Santiago for 22 cents each.

CHANGING MONEY TRICK BOX.



With this trick box you can make money change, from a penny into a dime or vice versa. Also make dimes appear and disappear at your command. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG,
1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

INDOO FLOWER-POT TRICK



With this trick you can make a plant grow right up in a flower-pot, before the eyes of your audience. An ordinary empty earthen flower-pot is handed to the spectators for examination. A handkerchief is then placed over it, and you repeat a few magic words, and wave your wand over it. When the handkerchief is removed there is a beautiful plant, apparently in full bloom, in the pot. Full directions with each outfit. Price, 15 cents by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

MARBLE VASE.



A clever and puzzling effect, easy to do; the apparatus can be minutely examined. Effect: A marble can be made to pass from the hand into the closed vase, which a moment before was shown empty. This is a beautiful enameled turned wood vase.

Price, 20c.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

NEW MASKS



Half-face masks with movable noses. A distinct novelty which will afford no end of amusement. They come in 6 styles, each a different face, such as Desperate Desmond, etc., and are beautifully colored and splendidly finished, with patent eyelets to prevent tearing. Price 15 cents apiece, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

JAPANESE WATER FLOWERS



Without exception, the most beautiful and interesting things on the market. They consist of a dozen dried-up sprigs, neatly encased in handsomely decorated envelopes, just as they are imported from Japan. Place one sprig in a bowl of water, and it begins to exude various bright tints. Then it slowly opens out into various shapes of exquisite flowers. They are of all colors of the rainbow. It is very amusing to watch them take form.

Small size, price 5 cents; large size, 10 cents a package, by mail, postpaid.

M. V. GALLIGAN, 419 W. 56th St., N. Y.

YOU ALL WANT THIS MEDAL!

You Can Get One for Six Cents!

Has a picture of Fred Fearnot on one side and Evelyn on the other. The chief characters of



"WORK AND WIN"

The Medals are beautifully fire-gilt.

In order that every reader of this Weekly may secure one or more of these medals, we have put the price away below cost, as you will see when you receive it. Send to us THREE TWO-CENT POSTAGE STAMPS, and we will send the medal to any address, postage paid, by return mail.

REMEMBER! You can secure as many medals as you want.

Address your envelope plainly to
FRANK TOUSEY, Publisher
166 West 23d Street, New York

TRICK FAN.



A lady's fan made of colored silk cloth. The fan may be used and then shut, and when it opens again, it falls in pieces; shut and open again and it is perfect, without a sign of a break. A great surprise for those not in the trick. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

Ayvad's Water-Wings



Learn to swim by one trial

Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-handkerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two pink marks under the mouthpiece.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BINGO.



It is a little metal box. It looks very innocent. But it is supplied with an ingenious mechanism which shoots off a harmless cap when it is opened. You can have more fun than a circus with this new trick. Place the BINGO in or under

any article and it will go off when the article is opened or removed. It can be used as a funny joke by being placed in a purse, cigarette box or between the leaves of a magazine, also, under any movable article, such as a book, tray, dish, etc. The BINGO can also be used as a Burglar Alarm or as a Theft Preventer by being placed in a drawer, money till, under a door or window, or under any article that would be moved or disturbed should a theft be attempted.

Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

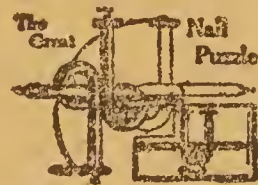
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

GOOD LUCK GUN FOB



The real western article, carried by the cowboys. It is made of fine leather, with a highly nicked buckle. The holster contains a metal gun, of the same pattern as those used by all the most famous scouts. Any boy wearing one of these fobs will attract attention. It will give him an air of western romance. The prettiest and most serviceable watch fob ever made. Send for one to-day. Price 20 cents each by mail postpaid.

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419 W. 56th St., N. Y.



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Made of 2 metal nails linked together. Keeps folks guessing; easy to take them apart when you know how. Directions with every one.

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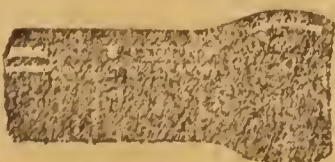


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A comical toy with which you can have no end of fun. It consists of a cut-out figure fastened to a thread suspended between the ends of a spring. By pressing the wires between the fingers and thumb the figure will dance in the funniest manner. Price 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

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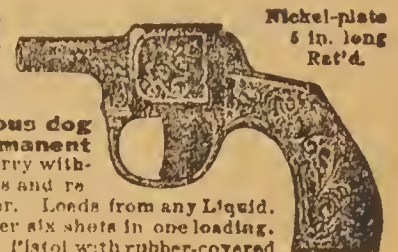
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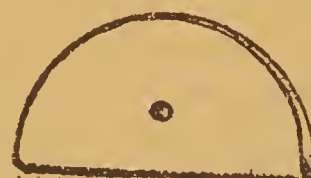
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This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid

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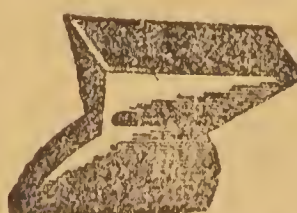


STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price by mail, postpaid 10c.; 3 for 25c.

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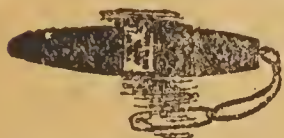


One of the most peculiar and mystifying pens on the market. It requires no ink. All you have to do is to dip it in water, and it will write for an indefinite period. The secret can only be learned by procuring one, and you can make it a source of both pleasure and amusement by claiming to your friends what it can do and then demonstrating the fact. Moreover, it is a good pen, fit for practical use, and will never leak ink into your pocket, as a defective fountain pen might do.

Price, 10c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

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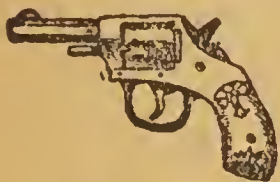


This cigar is made in exact imitation of a good one. It is held by a rubber cord which, with the attached safety pin, is fastened on the inside of the sleeve. When offered to a friend, as it is about to be taken, it will instantly disappear.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE X-RAY REVOLVER



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The strangest toy on the market. They are made in Japan and look like a little red mandarin. Each manikin is furnished with a cartridge to which a pair of legs are attached. By making two pin-holes in the cartridge, attaching it to the figure, and immersing it in a glass of water the little figure will dart up and down for an hour like a real diver. Price, by mail, 25 cents each, postpaid.

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COMICAL RUBBER STAMPS.



A complete set of five grotesque little people made of indestructible rubber mounted on black walnut blocks. The figures consist of Policeman, Chinaman, and other laughable figures as shown in pictures. As each figure is mounted on a separate block, any boy can set up a regular parade or circus by printing the figures in different positions.

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New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

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Price, 10c. by mail postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

GOOD LUCK PUZZLE.



It consists of three horseshoes fastened together. Only a very clever person can take off the closed horseshoe from the two linked horseshoes. But it can be done in a moment when the secret is known. Price, by mail, 10c. each.

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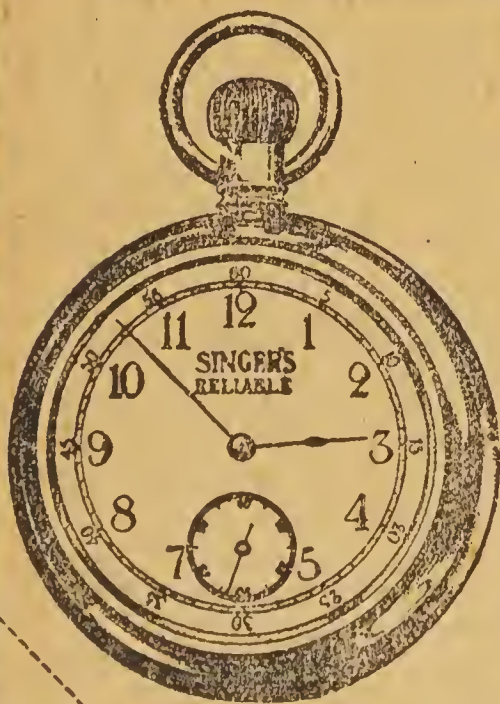


This one is a hummer! It is to all appearances an ordinary, but expensive lead pencil, with nickel trimmings. If your friend wants your pencil for a moment, hand it to him. When he attempts to write with it, the end instantly turns up, and he cannot write a stroke.

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